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The Nation.

April 12, 1986 $1.25; U.K. 65p

EDITORIAL

STIGMATIZING THE VICTIM

The evil flower of neo-Nazism blooms not only in the ordure of fringe cults and paranoid politics. The triumphant LaRouche candidates in Illinois are striking symbols of lunacy rampant, but they stand out against the ordinary ground of Good Americans who propose or support policies of social stigmatization and cultural repression as repulsive as anything encountered since the heyday of the Reich. The firing line this time is directed at gay men, the old anathema made doubly vulnerable by the AIDS epidemic. The viral agents that induce the disease are gender-blind and orientation-immune; worldwide, more straights than gays and as many women as men are infected. But in this country the low-risk majority has a high-risk minority fixed in its cross hairs.

"A generation ago homosexuals lived mostly in the closet. Nowadays they take over cities and parade on Halloween and demand equal rights for themselves qua homosexuals," William F. Buckley Jr. complained in a widely discussed article last month. To stanch gay sprawl and curb AIDS, he would have us embark on a series of measures ending in sterilization and compulsory tattooing for those who test positive for the HTLV-III antibody.

Then there is the idea broached in a proposal for the Pentagon by two San Francisco research outfits, joined by senior scholars from Stanford University's Hoover Institution, for "a 'Star of David' concept" of "mandatory and overt identification" of AIDS patients. Perhaps pink triangles would better make the historical point. Add to that the plans for homosexual concentration camps recommended not only by the LaRouchies but also by responsible physicians and respectable politicians, and a final solution does not seem out of the question.

BACK-CHANNEL DIPLOMACY
Kai Bird
Max Holland

THE TRUE COST OF INTERVENTION
Joshua Cohen
Joel Rogers

THE ILLINOIS FOLLIES
Gary Rivlin

PERILS OF MUBARAK
Stanley Reed

HAROLD ROSENBERG
Casey Blake

VIETNAM'S U.S. WAR
Saul Landau

WAITING FOR UNCLE SAM

NICARAGUA'S DISLOYAL OPPOSITION

TONY JENKINS

Nicaragua is a land of myths, where reality does not match perception. President Reagan himself recently proved the point in his March 16 speech on television. Afterward, his aides were obliged to scurry around correcting his falsehoods about Sandinista links to drug smuggling, anti-Semitism and Brazilian guerrillas. But one myth that remains firmly rooted in U.S. political circles has yet to be laid to rest; it is the myth that there is a democratic center in Nicaragua.

Perception: the opposition political parties, trade unions, media and church hierarchy are dedicated democrats who have been excluded from power by brutal, communistic repression. Reality: although these groups have undoubtedly been harassed, most of the Sandinistas' domestic opponents are not now, and never have been, good democrats. They have failed as an opposition and they must share a large part of the blame for Nicaragua's continuing agony. Yet, carried along on the rising tide of bipartisan consensus that the Sandinistas are totalitarian and undemocratic, Congress will shortly approve millions of dollars for President Reagan's bloodthirsty "freedom fighters."

It appears that the money will be frozen to give the Sandinistas time to reconsider their repressive ways. But if Congress wants a thriving pluralistic democracy in Nicaragua, it should address the principal conservative opposition group, the Democratic Coordinating Committee (otherwise known as the C.D.N. or the Coordinadora). The Coordinadora should be clearly told to abandon its fantasy of a U.S. invasion or a *contra* victory, to join the domestic political debate and to commit itself to the electoral process.

(*Continued on Page 520*)

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LETTERS.

SHCHARANSKY NO SPY

Washington

What was the "suffocating piety with which the Shcharansky affair has been treated in the press" that so offended Alexander Cockburn ["Beat the Devil," March 1]? Was it wrong or hypocritical to celebrate because someone who survived years of Soviet oppression and cruelty was unexpectedly released, and then showed himself to be not only heroic but charming?

Does Cockburn believe Anatoly Shcharansky was indeed a spy? Cockburn doesn't say that; he simply repeats part of a New York *Daily News* report by Lars-Erik Nelson stating that some information Shcharansky disclosed to a newsman, in order to refute the Russians' excuses for prohibiting Jewish emigration, was interpreted by others to produce intelligence information. That obviously doesn't make Shcharansky a spy, but if Cockburn didn't intend to insinuate that it does, why the title "Was Shcharansky a Spy?"

More important, why no reference anywhere in his column to Nelson's repeated insistence that Shcharansky "didn't know" the military implications of the information he gave? From the partial information, one might infer that the Russians were in some way justified in convicting Shcharansky. Is that what Cockburn means to imply?

Cockburn also uses the Nelson story to report that "one U.S. intelligence official . . . cried out with relief" that Shcharansky wasn't shot. Is that supposed to link Shcharansky to U.S. intelligence?

In fact, Nelson nowhere describes the American officials in question as "intelligence." His story reads:

> As American officials waited out the verdict at Shcharansky's 1978 trial, one of them said nervously, "I don't think the case would hold up in an American court—but, of course, he's not in an American court."
>
> When the Soviet court found Shcharansky guilty and sentenced him to fifteen years, another official blurted out, "Thank God, it's nothing more than that."

Moreover, there is nothing in the Nelson story to support Cockburn's statement that "the Defense Intelligence Agency . . . had been compiling a catalogue of Soviet military installations *as a result of* the Shcharansky-Toth collaboration." [Emphasis added.] Nelson simply wrote, "Adding to the Soviets' case against Shcharansky was a trip to Moscow by Gen. Sam Wilson, then the head of the Defense Intelligence Agency."

Finally, and just for the record, Shcharansky, a friend and ally of Andrei Sakharov, was not punished for spying for the United States, which, of course, is nonsense. He was charged and sentenced to thirteen years (not to fifteen, as Cockburn writes), because he was not only openly working for Jewish emigration but also monitoring the Helsinki Accord on human rights. *Herman Schwartz*
Professor of Law, American University

COCKBURN REPLIES

New York City

At the start of 1978, just about the time Shcharansky was imprisoned in the Soviet Union, the F.B.I. arrested Ronald Humphrey and David Truong and charged them with supplying classified information to the Socialist Republic of Vietnam. Both were given fifteen-year sentences. Their appeals failed. No piety, suffocating or otherwise, surrounds these two men, even though the information they supplied—pertaining to the normalization of relations between the United States and Vietnam—barely deserved to have a security classification; even though there were extenuating circumstances in the form of both men's familial ties in Vietnam; and even though it was clear that the arrests, trials and savage sentences were carefully designed as a show of political repression, part of the medication formulated to cure post-Vietnam syndrome.

Were Humphrey and Truong trafficking in "state secrets" and therefore vulnerable to charges of espionage? In the narrowest interpretation, yes; and it mattered not a whit whether either was aware of that fact. But were those charges leveled and upheld for entirely political reasons? Undoubtedly.

Now consider Shcharansky. The "suffocating piety" to which I referred and of which Professor Schwartz's letter is but one more example, consists essentially in the fact that the U.S. press was unable to deal with the case in terms other than those of hagiography, in which the martyrdom of an absolutely innocent man, wrought by the custodians of the Evil Empire, was successfully invoked by opponents of détente as an emblem of Soviet subhumanity. I cited Lars-Erik Nelson's *Daily News* column of February 14 at some length because it was a rare, indeed probably unique, example in the press here of a dispassionate consideration of the case. Nelson asked, Did the K.G.B. have any evidence for its charges of espionage against Shcharansky? He answered that in Soviet terms it did. (And if anyone wants to sneer at the words "Soviet terms," I encourage them to consider the fate of Humphrey and Truong.) At no point did I misrepresent Nelson's column. In the course of a telephone conversation about it, he told me of the Defense Intelligence Agency's catalogue, compiled as a result of the Shcharansky-Toth collaboration. In the same conversation I did however misunderstand him to be referring to U.S. intelligence officials awaiting the verdict. A high-level State Department official was who Nelson had in mind.

As I have said before, I think the concept of espionage is essentially bogus, contrived as an excuse for state repression. (I've also said that the only secret "intelligence" worth having comes from satellite observation and from decryption—which came out in *The Nation* as "description," but that's another story.) This analysis applies to Shcharansky, as to Humphrey and Truong, but even so, journalists still have the duty to try to get beyond hagiography in the service of the cold war. I know that some reporters did feel that Shcharansky may have been more compromised by Robert Toth's use of his material in the *Los Angeles Times* than they cared publicly to admit. They felt that any dispassionate treatment of the case might diminish Shcharansky's chances of release and lay them open to charges of being cat's-paws for the K.G.B. In other words, what we had was "war reporting," designed above all not to give aid and comfort to the "enemy," and subject to all the usual laws of prudent self-censorship. This is mostly the reporting we get about the Soviet Union, both from Moscow correspondents and from commentators, analysts and pisspots for "intelligence sources" in this country.

Over the long run, this war reporting has had a disastrous effect on relations between the United States and the Soviet Union, an effect greatly relished by supporters of the cold war, arms manufacturers, Edward Teller, Jerry Falwell, Ben Wattenberg and their hell-spawned legions. The same sort of war reporting is characteristic of their coverage of Israel, with different though equally disastrous results, as the suffocatingly pious treatment of Shcharansky's wife, Avital, excellently illustrated. Amid all the ecstatic coverage of her efforts to obtain the release of her husband, few either wished or dared to point out that as a member of Gush Emunim she is an ardent advocate of just that denial of human rights that she was protesting in the case of Anatoly. The day the Palestinians or Humphrey and Truong get equal time I'll listen more easily to professors' protests about my views of the Shcharansky affair and the circumstances that surround it. *Alexander Cockburn*

CORRECTION

A sentence was garbled in Jon Weiner's April 5 article. It should have read: "Nothing could be more damaging to the neocons, who've spent years trying to persuade the center that it's the left rather than the right that threatens the integrity of the university by injecting external political issues into academia."

The Nation welcomes letters—typed, double spaced and no longer than 300 words, please.

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EDITORIALS.

Metadiplomacy

If diplomacy is a reduction of war by other means, public relations has become a reduction of the reduction. Already far from the battlefields and the beachheads, superpowers have now moved out of the conference halls and away from the bargaining tables. The favored forums are the press conference and the advertising pages of metropolitan newspapers.

Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev promotes his foreign policy with full-page ads in *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post*, like a Macy's sale or a real estate offering; Secretary of State Shultz counters with an attack on that media strategy, deliberately avoiding the message. President Reagan markets his Star Wars plan like a Hollywood production; King Hussein conducts Middle East diplomacy by newspaper interview (only reporters from major American publications need apply); the Israeli Cabinet times its decisions to the New York network news schedules; Sandinistas Meet the Press almost as often as they face the *contras*; and the Philippine revolution, contrary to the old lyric, was indeed televised.

Nations used to fight over territory. As civilization de-

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veloped, they learned it was possible to sublimate their instinct for war into arguments over abstract issues and ideologies. Now leaders are content to do battle over one another's P.R. campaigns. That's progress.

The metadiplomacy raging in the media has replaced, for a while, the preparations for another summit meeting between Gorbachev and Reagan. That encounter seemed problematic from its inception as the only significant result of last November's summit in Geneva, which more or less foundered on the Star Wars issue. Having failed to make progress on arms control and the nuclear threat, the Soviet Union and the United States agreed to give it another try in Washington sometime this summer.

Over the winter, however, Reagan made it clear that he was unwilling even to consider putting Star Wars on the summit agenda. Gorbachev, who insists that controls on the arms race are meaningless without some agreement to defuse its most advanced and dangerous component, shelved the summit and began a worldwide promotional campaign for the nuclear testing moratorium he announced last August. That, he insisted, was the first step toward the dream of total nuclear disarmament, which he envisioned would be realized by the year 2000.

He must have known that Reagan would be hard to budge. Nuclear testing is essential to Star Wars research and the development of its space laser weapon. Testing is also important to the production of smaller, more accurate warheads that are supposed to give the Pentagon improved nuclear war-fighting capability, as opposed to deterrent strength. And beyond that, testing is a principal activity of the American nuclear weapons establishment, which has so much political and economic clout that no President, even if he wanted to, could easily oppose it. And Reagan does not want to. (Ironically, as Representative Les Aspin pointed out last week, a continuation of underground testing will allow the Russians to perfect smaller warheads, enabling them to increase the number on their MIRVs, and to develop X-ray lasers that could be used to destroy Star Wars components in space.)

The Russians still hope that public opinion in Europe and the United States can be mobilized to demand a halt to Star Wars in the interest of the summit process. So far, however, there has not been much encouraging response. Reagan's media blitz for his pet project may not be entirely convincing to anyone, but it has succeeded in diminishing the sense of crisis that fueled the peace movements here and abroad a few years ago. The installation of Euromissiles is virtually complete; the Congress has voted its freeze resolution; a summit has been held. "Strategic defense" has a soothing sound that effectively disguises its sinister intent. And for the mass audience, Reagan's media image exudes strength and control, while Gorbachev is beginning to look nervous and a little desperate.

Not so long ago, hundreds of thousands of people marched in New York, London, Bonn and other cities of the Western alliance in support of a freeze, disarmament and missile control. Last month, a few stragglers of the great peace army reached the Mojave Desert, where they have been abandoned by their bankrupt organization. It should be apparent now that the mass mobilization of a peace constituency on the nuclear issue alone will not be possible in the current period, and that other strategies must be developed. The most promising direction may be the way of larger political coalitions that merge local concerns with broader interests and thus produce a force that is greater than the sum of its parts. There is a real link between the military budget and cutbacks in social programs, between defense policy and imperial intervention, between economic growth and weapons expenditure. On the micropolitical level, farmers who are losing their land and homeowners who are hit by huge property tax increases should see the shadow of Star Wars on their predicament. Until and unless there is another explosion of nuclear *angst*, the more immediate anxieties of life in the atomic age may provide the basis for the politics of protest.

No disarmament plan is without flaws, catches and unstated advantages for its proponent. No plan is written without a consideration of its propaganda value. But among the current batch on the table, the Russians' moratorium on testing is so obviously useful as a symbol of commitment to a superpower settlement that only war lovers or death merchants would reject it out of hand. That Reagan has done so is cause enough to reignite the peace campaign.

The Deceivers

Last month the people of Illinois saw the Anti-politics slouching toward Chicago. As Gary Rivlin writes on page 517, the surprise victories of two followers of Lyndon LaRouche Jr. in the Democratic Party primary reflected a mixture of voter apathy and distaste for the Chicago machine, whose candidates on the regular line were unpopular with blacks, women and reformers. That's true enough and speaks ill of the party that allowed the LaRouchies to steal into its tent and that ran the same old hacks (or, in the case of Aurelia Pucinski, the daughter of one).

But the Illinois electorate's behavior also marked the recrudescence of democracy's most tenacious enemy. The LaRouchies provide an object lesson in what politics is not. As their shifting nomenclature over the years shows, they assume whatever identity serves their ends. LaRouche started out as a Trotskyist, but soon realized there was no future in that, and in 1976 he popped up as the Presidential candidate of the U.S. Labor Party, although he had no union backing whatsoever. Somewhere along the line he added the moniker National Caucus of Labor Committees to his group's aliases, and that name still attaches to the ruling circle of his sect. In 1980 he ran as a Democrat and in 1984 he reconstituted his organization as the National Democratic Policy Committee. These blatant attempts to draw ballot support as a sort of political knockoff failed—until the LaRouche roadshow hit Illinois and struck gold.

In addition to its bewildering array of names, the

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LaRouche movement expertly practices the politics of fear. Its demonology is rife with conspirators—the Trilateral Commission, the International Monetary Fund, the Jewish and Italian bankers, the British monarchy, Henry Kissinger and, behind all of them, the Great Satan, the Soviet Union. Whatever turns you off—drugs, AIDS, assassins—the LaRouchies are there to say Boo! and prescribe their drastic remedies, designed to kill the patient, the democratic system. Add to all that a readiness to bring libel suits at the drop of a critical word, a devout belief in brainwashing and a pervasive paranoia, and you have all the elements of a standard American cult. Paradoxically, this neoprimitivism is counterbalanced by a fanatical faith in the blessings of technology that engenders a worship of lasers, nuclear power and Star Wars.

Yet the LaRouchies' professed convictions are less worrisome than their inner lack of them. They are the psychopaths, the hollow men of American politics; their party is a vacuum, a black hole. Their attraction is a negative one, to the lost, the alienated, the cynical, the callow, the indifferent. They embody the emptiness in American party politics today—for starters, the wimpishness of regular Democrats who have let them get away with purloining the party name. But in a wider sense they exploit the despair and cynicism that has seeped into the system. There lies the danger, and we can hope that the Illinois debacle will at least have served to bring these creepy-crawlies out from under the rock. Yes, their victory was partly a fluke, but the people of Illinois caught a glimpse of the enemy's face, behind the masks and the loony doctrines. He is the eternal deceiver, who must be exorcised by the forces of small-*d* democracy.

Marcos on Trial

Although the Reagan Administration helped give the tottering Marcos regime the final shove, we should never forget how long the United States propped it up with aid and friendly gestures. Documents sought in a civil suit being tried in Seattle could shed considerable light on one aspect of that support—the secret cooperation between the U.S. government and Philippine intelligence in the latter's campaign to harass and even murder anti-Marcos Filipinos in this country.

On March 26, Marcos himself was subpoenaed in the suit, which was originally filed in 1982 by the relatives of two Philippine unionists murdered in Seattle the previous year. The two victims, Gene Viernes and Silme Domingo, were shot by hit men allegedly hired by Constantine (Tony) Baruso, president of Local 37 of the International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union. Baruso, a strong Marcos backer, was arrested shortly after the murder but was immediately released. Two of the hit men, who had been identified by Domingo before he died, were convicted of the murders. Now the dead men's relatives want Marcos and his former Chief of Staff, Gen. Fabian Ver, to testify about the role of the Philippine National Intelligence and Security Agency (NISA), which Ver headed, in the killings. The plaintiffs charge that the Marcos regime ordered the murders as part of the larger campaign to silence U.S.-based dissidents.

Previously subpoenaed in the same case were ten U.S. agencies, including the C.I.A., the F.B.I., the Immigration and Naturalization Service, the Defense Intelligence Agency, the State Department and the Customs Service. The plaintiffs contend that those agencies have knowledge of U.S. government cooperation with the anti-dissident campaign.

According to former C.I.A. man Ralph McGehee, that theory is not farfetched. U.S. and Philippine intelligence services have a long history of collaboration, and under the Reagan Administration the number of Marcos operatives in this country increased. A 1982 D.I.A. report mentioned the arrival in the United States of a five-man Philippine military attaché team that would "report on, and possibly operate against anti-Marcos . . . activists." Former Carter Administration officials have said that in 1979 the United States intercepted messages from Manila ordering Philippine agents to harass Marcos's opponents here. And last year, Bonifacio Gillego, a former officer in the Intelligence Service of the Armed Forces of the Philippines, wrote a report on the numerous intelligence operatives assigned to the United States [see Fred Poole and Max Vanzi, "Marcos's Secret War in America," *The Nation*, May 12, 1984]. In March 1981 U.S. intelligence agencies stepped up their surveillance of Philippine dissidents, and the plaintiffs in the civil suit charge that information provided to Philippine authorities, some of it erroneous, led to the decision to have Viernes and Domingo eliminated.

As we went to press, Marcos had not responded to his subpoena to give a deposition on April 15. Nor had the U.S. agencies, which were supposed to provide their testimony on April 7. However, the U.S. Customs Service, which confiscated materials brought in by the Marcos party, has admitted that it has documents on seven individuals connected with NISA. The agency refuses to release this information on "foreign policy" and "national security" grounds. Whether the other agencies will also reach for the national security blanket is unclear. No valid reasons of state remain for withholding the evidence on this sordid chapter in U.S.-Philippine relations. President Reagan should have it straight by now: Gene Viernes and Silme Domingo were the good guys.

Speaking of revelations about the Marcos years, a report issued by the Philippine Sugar Commission charges that President Marcos and his cronies skimmed more than $1 billion from sugar sales between 1975 and 1984. *The Nation* reported this story some time ago. In the October 4, 1980, issue Brennon Jones wrote, "The sugar industry has been harnessed for the personal gain of the President." Jones also pointed out that partly as a result of Marcos's greed, the industry went into a tailspin, depressing sugar workers' wages and forcing thousands of them out of their jobs. We trust that U.S. authorities will energetically assist the Aquino government in tracking down the sweet profits that Marcos and company expatriated to this country.

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BEAT THE DEVIL.

Oversell

The Reagan Administration first disclosed "preliminary information" about a Nicaraguan "attack" of Honduras in a press briefing conducted by Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs Elliott Abrams on the morning of Monday, March 24. By Monday night the hawkish Peter Collins of ABC was reporting from Honduras against a backdrop of file footage from a report he had done a week earlier extolling the *contras*. "As many as 2,000 Sandinista troops have crossed this river from Nicaragua and penetrated fifteen to twenty miles inside Honduras," Collins announced. "U.S. intelligence sources say this camp was assaulted four times over the weekend. . . . A Sandinista helicopter overflew Honduran territory much of Sunday, apparently to coordinate the action. . . . American analysts are mystified as to why the Sandinistas would risk damage to their image with a major attack on Honduras at a time the question of aid to the *contras* is still before Congress." With its emphasis on "a major attack on Honduras" rather than on the *contra* camps, his report closely followed the Reagan Administration's script being read out in Washington. Collins's reports from Central America have long been in step with official U.S. policy, and the fact that Abrams had been in Tegucigalpa on March 21 made one wonder whether Abrams and Collins had mounted a collaborative enterprise. And indeed on that same Friday, one day before the State Department says the Nicaraguan incursion took place, ABC News was calling around Washington seeking confirmation of what it labeled rumors of an invasion of Honduras, implying the story would be their lead that evening.

By Tuesday afternoon, with Tip O'Neill's fulminations against Nicaragua, it looked as though Congress and media were being stampeded. Already by Tuesday morning Reagan had dispatched the "emergency" $20 million to a surprised Honduran government. But the other networks and reporters such as James LeMoyne of *The New York Times* were reluctant to subscribe to the Administration's attempts to foment war fever. Thus a full-blown electronic Nuremberg rally was avoided. As with Reagan's speech to the nation on the matter of the $100 million aid package to the *contras*, the invasion was oversold.

Even so, Reagan managed to get his $20 million down to Honduras, thus permitting what an excellent *Boston Globe* editorial of March 31 called a piece of arms laundering for the *contras*. As for the idea that these arms are "defensive," Francisco Serrano, a Nicaraguan soldier, had an apt comment: "Last year they voted 'humanitarian aid' for the *contras*. With that humanitarian aid they murdered some of my closest friends, tortured and killed three peasants from a village near where we were, and threw them in the river. Now they're talking about giving them defensive weapons. There's no such thing as a defensive weapon for the *contras* because they don't have any territory to defend. Their entire purpose is to attack."

The Reagan Administration, which now has U.S. helicopters ferrying Honduran troops to the border, continues to deny the possibility of deeper U.S. involvement.

Footnote: The quotation from Francisco Serrano comes from one of the best resources available for anyone following events in Nicaragua, namely the series of "updates" (at least three a month) put out by the Central American Historical Institute, Georgetown University, Washington, DC 20057, and available at an annual subscription rate of $30.

Pop Go the Pope's Weasels

A saga that began when Mehmet Ali Agca took a shot at the Pope in St. Peter's Square, on May 13, 1981, ended on March 29 with the acquittal, for lack of evidence, of Sergei Antonov and his presumed co-conspirators. But this does not mean that the great propaganda enterprise is over. Major U.S. news institutions such as *The New York Times*, NBC and *Reader's Digest* have invested too much in the "Bulgarian connection" over the years to abandon it now. Indeed that connection was much more the creation of the media than of the state agencies of propaganda—the C.I.A. and State Department—which, particularly in the case of the C.I.A., took a more reserved attitude toward the affair.

Sure enough, *The Times*'s John Tagliabue had a post-verdict wrap-up on March 31 reiterating much of the Claire Sterling–Paul Henze thesis about the assassination attempt. To someone who has not followed the case closely, Tagliabue's article must have had a convincing air. Discussing Agca's apparently intimate knowledge of Antonov's apartment, Tagliabue wrote that "even attorneys for the Bulgarians acknowledge that many of the details did not appear in Italian publications, if at all, until after Mr. Agca mentioned them to his interrogators," thus implying that Agca must have conspired with Antonov in the apartment. But the Bulgarians' attorneys had discovered the very fact that Tagliabue says they *acknowledged*—a fact which, when coupled with Agca's statement of June 28, 1983 (never retracted), that he had never visited Antonov's apartment nor met his wife or daughter, leads to the conclusion that he must have been coached in prison. And how does Tagliabue deal with that possibility, for which much evidence now exists? With one sentence: "The more sinister view, espoused by critics of the case on the political left, including Soviet bloc governments, is that Mr. Agca was fed the information by Western intelligence services intent on building a case against the Soviet bloc."

So much for *The Times*, whose handling of the story was a scandal. Tagliabue had the impudence to write that "few people stood up to assail the magistrate who assembled the case against the Bulgarians," thus suppressing the unwholesome truth that neither he nor his colleagues had bothered to report one word of the defense's rebuttal, as laid out by Giuseppe Consolo over four days, starting on March 4.

The Bulgarian connection now enters a period of semi-active senility. It will be trundled out every few months, while Claire Sterling and Paul Henze insist that only a plot by liberals in the C.I.A. and the State Department saved Antonov and his associates from conviction.

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ALEXANDER COCKBURN

The Cop

Sterling's main sponsor at *The New York Times* was A.M. Rosenthal, whose views on tyranny were afforded at immense length to readers of the Sunday *Magazine* for March 23. The article was interesting because several thousand words of his sloppy, self-regarding prose revealed Rosenthal to be not only lacking in irony but also rather stupid, and profoundly ignorant of history. On the matter of irony, Rosenthal quotes himself proudly in the following exchange with Pavel, whom he describes as a Russian radio man. "Pavel rose to his feet and proposed a toast: 'We are all colleagues and friends, despite our differences.' I then rose with enormous, careful dignity. 'We can be friends, but we will never be colleagues because I'm a newspaperman and you're a cop, Pavel.'" As executive editor of *The Times* and as a person who has boasted of his determination to keep his paper's news columns "straight," i.e. devoid of liberal taint, Rosenthal is of course one of the more important ideological cops in the country.

As far as ignorance of history is concerned, to take one example, Rosenthal writes of Korea in 1945: "Suddenly, the Government of the South, the only legitimate government in the land, found the entire northern half taken away. Suddenly, by Russian aggressiveness and American compliance, the Korean nation was severed." This is a serious mauling of the truth. What actually happened was that the United States suppressed the unified national resistance forming a government, and as Edgar Snow reported in the *Saturday Evening Post* in 1946, "stopped a revolution there."

The best accounts of the extraordinary suppression of Korean history in the West are Bruce Cumings's book *The Origins of the Korean War* and Jon Halliday's essay "Anticommunism and the Korean War," in the *Socialist Register* for 1984. As Halliday shows, far from exhibiting "compliance," as Rosenthal suggests, the United States "was backing, arming and often participating in a reign of terror which ultimately broke the left-wing movement in the South and drove it either underground, into prison, into the North or to its graves. . . . by the time the Korean war erupted in June 1950 probably 100,000 had been massacred or killed in guerrilla fighting in the South." This is all hidden history, like so much else of America's worldwide counterinsurgency and sponsorship of reactionary regimes in the immediate postwar period. Nowhere is the history more hidden than in Korea where, as Halliday remarks, "Without U.S. (and Russian) occupation and division, the left would easily have taken over the whole of Korea, just as it did in Yugoslavia. South Korea was not invaded by North Korea in 1950, it was invaded by U.S. imperialism in 1945."

Knock Knees

April 9 is the anniversary of the massacre at Deir Yassin in 1948, when Etzel and Lehi thugs massacred 250 Arab men, women and children. On that same day 90 percent of the stations in the public television system will show a program called *Flashpoint*, a two-and-a-half-hour package of two Israeli films and one, of the sort usually described as controversial, produced by David Koff titled *Occupied Palestine*. Many stations, as in Philadelphia and Miami, are also scheduling an hour of discussion of the issues treated in the films. But not WNET in New York or WETA in Washington. Both have refused to take the package and have denounced *Occupied Palestine*. WNET and WETA thus continue the knock-kneed course that led to the screening of Reed Irvine's ridiculous corrective to the WGBH Vietnam series.

Say Hi to History

I jumped out of bed at 4:30 A.M. last week and drove down to the Key West state beach to look at Halley's comet. About twenty people were already there. My friend Irving Weinman was at the center of an admiring group, bellowing authoritative instructions: "Down from the bright star on top of the Teapot constellation, left a bit from the dim one," and so on. I couldn't see a thing but everyone else said they'd spotted the comet, so I let out a few affirmative yips. At that point an earnest fellow in wire-rim glasses who had been laboriously assembling a telescope pointed it at a different bit of the sky from Irving's favored patch and said, "There it is if you want to see it."

"It" was thoroughly dissatisfying—a milky blur in the eyepiece—but I went home feeling I'd got my money's worth. The comet's appeal is presumably that its interim appearances give people a sense of intimacy with protracted time, at an angle to our normal experience of minutes, weeks, years and so forth. It's like being asked to a party with all the other watchers of Halley's comet throughout human history.

I like skipping across the decades like that. My brother and I made a point last year of calling on Joe Vesel in his home near Carmel, California. Vesel was a witness to the murder of the Archduke Franz Ferdinand in Sarajevo on June 28, 1914, which prompted the outbreak of World War I, hence determining the destiny of our century. Vesel also had gone to school with the assassin, Gavrilo Princip. Vesel is bursting with vim at 85, and he plunged into a detailed lecture on Balkan politics at the time of the assassination, with much edifying incidental detail, such as how Emperor Franz Josef had kissed him on the forehead when he, Vesel, was 10. Franz Josef had as a young man surely known people who had listened to Mozart play at the Viennese court.

I later told my mother that I had shaken hands with this particular chapter of history, and she riposted with the information that as a little girl, her grandmother Edith Blake had met an elderly Frenchman who as a little boy had been one of Marie Antoinette's pages. Edith asked him if Marie Antoinette had been pretty. He said, "Very," and drew a sketch of the Queen, which I can remember looking at when I was a youth. Since many *Nation* readers seem to conclude from my prose that I am incredibly old, let me say that my own arrival on the planet barely preceded Hitler's invasion of the Soviet Union.

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CAPITOL LETTER.

KAI BIRD AND MAX HOLLAND

■ Wilson and Qaddafi: An Untold Story

The curious pilgrimage of U.S. Ambassador to the Vatican William Wilson to Libya raises an intriguing question: To what extent are President Reagan's own political appointees in the State Department trying to check the President's cowboy diplomacy? *The New York Times* revealed Wilson's secret mission just before last month's duel in the Gulf of Sidra.

Wilson, a longtime Reagan crony, visited Libyan dictator Col. Muammar el-Qaddafi in early January, just days after the airport attacks on travelers in Rome and Vienna. At the time Qaddafi claimed he had met with an unnamed U.S. diplomat to discuss ways of reducing tensions. The upper echelons in the State Department—totally unaware of Wilson's self-styled peacekeeping mission—flatly denied Qaddafi's account. It turned out that the dictator whom Reagan portrays as an inveterate liar was right.

Both *The Times* and *The Washington Post* attributed Wilson's mission to his interests in the oil business. That is a plausible theory, especially because until a month ago the State Department, contrary to its rules, allowed Wilson to keep his seat on the board of the Pennzoil Corporation, which has business ties with Libya. Moreover, since arriving in Vatican City in 1981, then as Reagan's personal envoy, Wilson has been involved in several incidents that suggest he has persistently tried to improve U.S. relations with Qaddafi. One source, cited by *The Washington Post* as being "familiar with Wilson's thinking," said Wilson has been communicating with Libya "over a period of time."

But there could be another explanation for Wilson's mission. Political appointees fill an unusually high number of ambassadorships under the Reagan Administration, and it is possible that these top appointees were instructed at the outset of Reagan's Presidency to circumvent the State Department bureaucracy, which is considered to be full of striped-pants types, some of them with pinko tendencies. Recall, too, that former national security adviser William Clark had absolutely no foreign policy credentials for his post, which he got because of his close friendship with Reagan. Wilson insists that at the time of his appointment as envoy he was given blanket authority by Clark to carry out at his own discretion missions like the overture to Qaddafi. When asked if he had in effect approved Wilson's mission, Clark would say only that "there was no authorization to Ambassador Wilson or anyone else to carry on unilateral communication with Qaddafi."

But Clark's response begs the question: Did the Reagan team, desirous of unencumbered views from its political envoys, establish "back-channel communications" in 1981 to allow Wilson and others like him to cable the White House directly? Secretary of State George Shultz reportedly reprimanded Wilson for his clandestine diplomacy, but the White House has had remarkably little to say about his apparent flouting of the President's Libya policy. That back channel might be what ultimately prevented Wilson from being summarily fired.

■ The Grenada Affair

Evidence of another attempt by a Reagan insider to curb his boss's bellicosity comes from a diplomat who served in the Caribbean region at the time of the Grenada invasion. Last month, at a Midwestern university seminar, the former official, who spoke off the record, revealed that a Reagan political appointee in the Caribbean region worked assiduously to repair relations with Grenadian Prime Minister Maurice Bishop from 1981 to 1983. The appointee believed that Bishop was sincere in wanting to avoid a showdown with Reagan, and he encouraged Bishop to announce political reforms in hopes of easing tensions with Washington.

As a result, in the spring of 1983 Bishop sent a letter to President Reagan promising to call elections and offering to discuss U.S. concerns about his regime. In June, Bishop suddenly turned up in Washington, hoping to see the President. But Reagan refused to receive him; instead, Bishop met secretly with William Clark and Deputy Secretary of State Kenneth Dam. The meeting was a failure from Bishop's and the envoy's standpoint: U.S. military and economic pressure on Grenada increased.

Bishop eventually paid with his life for that ill-fated mission. His efforts to appease the Reagan Administration angered New Jewel Movement hard-liners, especially Deputy Prime Minister Bernard Coard, who plotted Bishop's overthrow with Gen. Hudson Austin. As further evidence of the support for Bishop in certain Administration circles, the former diplomat disclosed that when the leaders of the coup detained the Grenadian leader, C.I.A. officials actually discussed rescuing the man whom Reagan had shunned.

A unified U.S. policy came about only after Bishop's murder and Coard's seizure of power. Officials involved with the Grenada situation in State, Defense and the C.I.A. regarded Coard as a militant Marxist who was inclined to make trouble for Americans in the region. At that point, according to the former diplomat, U.S. officials, aided by British diplomats (contrary to Margaret Thatcher's ex post facto criticisms of the Grenada operation), "encouraged" the Governor General of Grenada, Sir Paul Scoon, to write the letter appealing to Washington to intervene—the letter which became the fig leaf for the U.S. invasion.

Given the former diplomat's testimony on the Grenada maneuvering, as well as William Wilson's explanation for his seemingly idiosyncratic mission, the foreign policy-making apparatus in the Reagan Administration may be far more complex than is generally believed. The usual theory—repeated when Clark's successor, Robert McFarlane, resigned as national security adviser last year—has it that the State Department is locked in its usual battle for primacy with the National Security Council. Although true to some extent, there is an overlooked irony in the present conduct of American foreign policy. Once removed from the surreal debates in Washington, some of Reagan's most intimate and like-minded friends see the folly of American ways. They may even have tried to prevent their President from becoming an international bully—without much success.

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ARTICLES.

CENTRAL AMERICA POLICY

The True Cost Of Intervention

JOSHUA COHEN AND JOEL ROGERS

Two debates—over the size and composition of the Federal budget and over U.S. policies toward Central America—dominate the news from Washington. These debates should be joined. An accurate accounting indicates that U.S. policy in Central America and the Caribbean cost about $9.5 billion in 1985, or about eight times the $1.2 billion officially acknowledged by the Reagan Administration. U.S. activities in the region are also the cutting edge of a massive commitment, more than $100 billion annually, to maintain a broadly interventionist foreign policy. At a time of large deficits and continuing cutbacks in social programs, the dimensions of this commitment should invite attention and debate.

Our focus on the material costs of intervention should not be misconstrued. We believe that current U.S. interventionist policies, in Central America and elsewhere, are morally wrong. Even if they cost nothing at all, we would still think they were wrong. But neither do we think that paying attention to costs obscures moral issues. As the British Prime Minister William Gladstone observed, budgets "are not merely matters of arithmetic." They are a record of the choices that a government makes and the values to which it commits its energies. Giving notice to the material dimension of those choices and commitments merely underscores the need to make moral judgments about them.

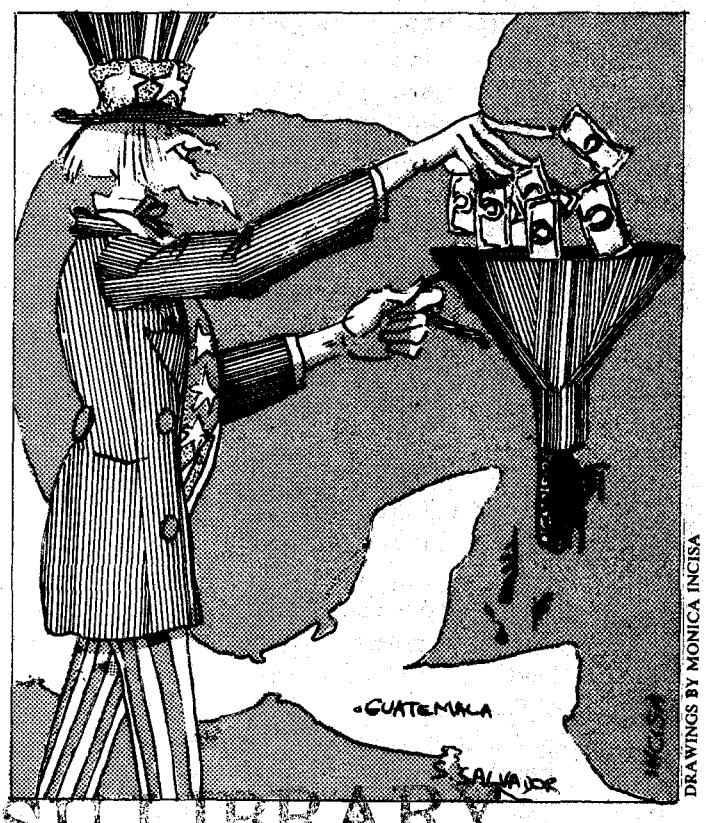
Three observations frame our assessment of the costs of current U.S. policies in Central America and the Caribbean.

First, from the earliest days of the Reagan Presidency Central America has served as the high-intensity symbol of an increasingly aggressive U.S. foreign policy. The Administration has repeatedly emphasized the close ties between its policies in the region and its broader aim of restoring U.S. power and "credibility" to pre-Vietnam War levels.

Second, U.S. military and foreign policy analysts have recently shown renewed interest in improving strategies for supporting insurgency and counterinsurgency efforts around the world. That interest has focused on the potential for low-intensity warfare, reflecting the belief of such Administration figures as Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger that "low-level conflict will likely remain the most immediate threat to free world security for the rest of this century." There is little consensus about just what makes a conflict low-intensity. But analysts generally agree that the aim in such a conflict is for U.S. interests to prevail without committing large numbers of U.S. ground troops. To avoid that kind of commitment, the United States must be prepared to engage in long-term programs for funding, supporting and advising insurgency and counterinsurgency forces; to pursue economic and psychological warfare as well as covert action; and, if need be, to deploy small numbers of U.S. troops specially trained and organized for Third World conflicts [see Michael Klare, "The New U.S. Strategic Doctrine," *The Nation*, December 28/January 4, 1986].

Third, the United States is now pursuing a low-intensity strategy in Central America—building bases; running continual ground and naval exercises; mounting covert operations, psychological warfare and economic blockades; and providing money, weapons and military training to insurgency and counterinsurgency forces. Central America is a testing ground for new U.S. interventionist capabilities and strategies.

Estimates of the costs of U.S. military commitments in particular regions of the world are always complicated and



DRAWINGS BY MONICA INCISA

Joshua Cohen is an associate professor of philosophy and political science at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Joel Rogers is an assistant professor of political science at Rutgers University, Newark. This article is excerpted from their Inequity and Intervention: The Federal Budget and Central America, *which will be published this week by South End Press as part of the Domestic Roots of U.S. Foreign Policy project of Policy Alternatives for the Caribbean and Central America.*

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partly speculative. In addition, the Administration's low-intensity strategy in Central America keeps both the actual and perceived costs of its commitments there relatively low. Still, military analysts do make cost assessments for other regions of special interest to the United States, such as Western Europe and East Asia. There is no reason not to attempt one for Central America.

We begin with "security" assistance, the most widely discussed cost of U.S. policy in the region. Last year the United States spent more than $1.4 billion on all forms of foreign assistance to Central America, a more than twenty-fold real increase over the $64 million spent in 1978. What portion of that $1.4 billion should be counted as security assistance rather than economic assistance, however, is a matter of controversy. President Reagan has repeatedly claimed that U.S. aid to the region is primarily economic. Addressing a joint session of Congress in April 1983, he claimed that "77 cents out of every dollar we will spend in the area this year goes for food, fertilizers and other essentials for economic growth and development." Reagan's assertion rests on a characterization of the State Department's Economic Support Fund (E.S.F.) program—which alone accounts for more than half of all U.S. assistance to the region—as constituting economic assistance.

We classify E.S.F. as a security/military assistance program, however. It is designed to provide funds to countries of major foreign policy significance to the United States. The leading E.S.F. recipients are Israel and Egypt; many countries with far more serious financial and development problems receive nothing at all from the program. Moreover, E.S.F. assistance permits recipients to devote other resources to military ends. The $285 million that the Administration provided El Salvador last year, for example, helped that government finance imports from the United States. But like "humanitarian" aid to the *contras*, this "economic" assistance also enabled the government of El Salvador to use other resources to pursue its military activities, including its savage air war against its own population. And although our classification of E.S.F. differs from the President's, it is not that controversial. The Administration's own foreign aid budget lists E.S.F., together with military aid, under the heading of "security assistance." A number of experts agree with this classification, according to a report on U.S. assistance to Central America by the Congressional Research Service. They argue that "the ESF in Central America is basically a security/military program undertaken to prop up existing regimes and the elites who support them."

If the E.S.F. program is counted as a security/military program, then $998 million—or nearly 70 percent of U.S. assistance to Central America—now goes for security/military assistance. That represents a significant shift from 1980, when, using the same program classifications, 26 percent of U.S. aid was security assistance, while 74 percent was economic.

The costs of the security assistance programs represent only a small fraction of total costs, however. The United States also has a large and growing military presence in Central America and the Caribbean, and any complete estimate must include the costs of maintaining this presence. Those costs have several components:

Military Exercises: In 1981 the United States held two military exercises in the region. In 1982 there were five, and in 1983 there were ten. By 1984 the number had grown to twenty. These exercises continued on a routine basis throughout 1985. Some of the operations were relatively small; others were enormous. Ocean Venture '84, for example, a two-week joint Army, Navy, Air Force and Marine Corps operation, involved 30,000 troops, an aircraft carrier, 35 ships and 250 planes. Big Pine II lasted for six months and at its peak involved 5,500 troops in Honduras and more than 16,000 troops on ships and planes. The military exercises commonly overlap. In mid-November 1984, six exercises were taking place simultaneously, five of them directed against Nicaragua.

Military Construction: There has been considerable military construction in the region, particularly in Honduras. The United States has built eight to ten air bases that can handle large transports, and several that are capable of handling high-performance fighter planes.

Forces: More than 9,000 U.S. troops are stationed in Panama (including the 193d Infantry Brigade); 1,000 to 1,500 are regularly in Honduras, 1,500 in Bermuda, 2,500 at Guantanamo in Cuba, 3,500 in Puerto Rico and 70 in El Salvador.

The total cost of these three components likely runs to more than $3 billion a year—$2.5 billion for the forces, $500 million for the exercises and some $100 million for the construction. Together with the security assistance, this pushes the costs of U.S. policy in the region to about $4 billion.

To stop there, however, would also seriously underestimate the costs, since the costs of exercises alone reflect only the tip of U.S. involvement. A complete accounting must also include the costs of *buying* and *supporting* at least some of the forces that are not stationed in the region but that are exercised there, as well as some of those that would be used in the event of an invasion.

The assessment here proceeds in two steps. The first is to estimate the costs of buying and supporting different sorts of major military forces. Following other analysts, we estimate that on average it costs $2.5 billion per year for a ground division and $3.5 billion for a carrier battle group.

The second step is to assess how many of those units are assigned to a particular region. This is complicated for the Central American and Caribbean region because, unlike Western Europe and East Asia, it does not have a large complement of forces officially designated, or "programmed,"

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for it. Assigning forces thus requires looking beyond the programmed force commitments and assessing what portion of other forces should be included in an accounting of regional military costs. Inevitably, such an evaluation requires making judgments, and for that reason *any* realistic assessment will be "soft" and subject to controversy. But there is no way around the problem. Although any realistic assessment will be controversial because it involves making judgments, the failure to make them would require us to accept an assessment that is obviously distorted.

As an example of the problem, consider ground forces. The U.S. Southern Command, headquartered in Panama, has responsibility for Central and South America. But few troops are assigned to it, and those that are account only partially for the scope of U.S. commitments in the Central American and Caribbean region. The ground forces that are regularly exercised in the region and that would be used if there was an invasion are not permanently assigned to this command. They come instead from the U.S. Readiness Command and are available for rapid deployment in the Persian Gulf and other regions, including Central America.

Should some of the costs of those other forces be counted in the costs of current U.S. policy in the region? We think they should. The Army's annual statement for 1986 asserts that "regional conflicts in the Middle East, Asia, or Latin America" are "more probable" than a general war, indicating the importance of Central America in current military planning. Since 1983 the Army has also been devoting considerable resources to the development of light infantry divisions that are designed for use primarily in low-intensity conflicts in the Third World, and concern about Central America has been prominent in this initiative. Writing for the *National Journal*, Michael R. Gordon reported that in "internal Pentagon briefings on the light divisions, the Army has . . . emphasized their possible use in Central America." Gordon also quotes a Pentagon official as saying that "Central America is pretty high up on the list," while another "ranking Pentagon official" is cited as offering the following explanation of the initiative: "The Army is trying to increase its budget share, and Central America and the non-Western world is where the action is in terms of money and prestige." Some of the costs of these ground divisions, then, should be charged to the policy in Central America and the Caribbean.

We make a similar judgment about naval forces. Given the intensity of Navy operations in the region, and the magnitude of the Reagan naval buildup, it seems reasonable to assign the costs of some naval forces to the region.

Taking all this into account—the attention to Central America that is demonstrated by the Administration's high-intensity symbolism, the continual military exercises, the military construction, the emphasis on the region in discussion of the new light divisions, and the forces that would be needed for direct intervention—we charge two ground divisions ($2.5 billion per division) and one carrier battle group ($3.5 billion) to Central America and the Caribbean. These costs, which include the $3.2 billion already noted for forces stationed in the region and for exercises and military con-

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struction, add $8.5 billion each year to the $1 billion of security assistance. Taking all the costs together, we come out at roughly $9.5 billion spent annually on current U.S. military/security policies toward Central America and the Caribbean.

It bears repeating that this estimate is soft. Some analysts put the costs slightly lower, at $7 billion a year, and others put them much higher, at $19 billion. Reasonable people can differ about where in this range the costs should be fixed. But any reasonable estimate would be higher than the Administration's $1.2 billion, because any reasonable estimate must include the high costs of building, maintaining and replacing the military apparatus—the capital goods—required for carrying out current policies.

The direct cost of U.S. policies in the region raises the issue of spending priorities. Although $9.5 billion is only 1 percent of the Federal budget, it would have been enough in 1985 to restore many social programs to the levels projected under pre-Reagan policies. If spent otherwise, it could have restored the combined cuts in Aid to Families with Dependent Children, food stamps, child nutrition and vocational education programs, Low Income Energy Assistance, Medicaid, social services block grants and Guaranteed Student Loans; or more than matched the $9.2 billion that was cut from Social Security; or the $6.8 billion cut from unemployment insurance; or the $5.4 billion cut from Medicare.

The $9.5 billion estimate of annual costs is not an estimate of the costs of a U.S. invasion of the region. Such an invasion cannot be ruled out, of course. The exercises and construction in the region serve in part as training and preparation for direct military intervention, and, as some House Democrats have recently argued, the repeated military failures of the *contras* in Nicaragua will encourage the Administration to invade. According to an article in *The New York Times* last June, "the military is prepared for contingencies," and "the buildup of the Southern Command . . . is now largely complete and . . . adequate to carry out any likely emergency in the region."

What would an invasion cost the United States? Naturally that depends on the scope and level of local resistance. On all accounts that resistance would be intense in either El Salvador or Nicaragua. Reporting on the views of several military analysts and consultants, Georgetown University political scientist and former State Department policy planner Theodore H. Moran has offered a conservative accounting of the costs to the United States of an invasion of Nicaragua. Making the improbable assumption that such an invasion would not lead to a regional war, Moran puts the costs at $16 billion over a five-year period. Some 2,000 to 2,500 U.S. troops would be killed, 9,000 to 19,000 would be wounded, and a one-and-a-half division U.S. occupation force would remain in Nicaragua for at least five years. The costs to the Nicaraguans themselves "are likely to be very much higher," he says.

In assessing the costs of U.S. policy in Central America we have restricted our attention to the direct costs of that policy. But as noted at the outset, Central America is the high-intensity symbol and testing ground for a much broader interventionist policy. If the Reagan Administration is "successful" in Central America, that success may lead it to attempt similar actions elsewhere in the world. As a result, there is no simple way to separate the direct costs of policies in the region from the broader costs of a generally interventionist foreign policy.

What are those broader costs? Once again, assessments of this kind are complicated and speculative. Those who make them, however, agree that interventionist forces include at least some of the aircraft carrier task forces (five to nine of the fifteen planned by the Reagan Administration), six to ten of the seventeen active Army divisions (especially the lighter and more mobile divisions), two to three Marine divisions, the Special Operations Forces and some sealift, airlift and amphibious ships. That is a massive commitment of resources.

But the costs of intervention go beyond the costs of conventional weapons. Administration officials have repeatedly underscored that they see an unbreakable link between U.S. advantages in strategic nuclear forces and its willingness to use conventional force. In their view, strategic nuclear force serves as the final guarantee of the capacity to use nonnuclear force in local conflicts, and thus, as Alexander Haig has said, "casts a shadow over every significant geopolitical decision," and "affects on a day-to-day basis the conduct of American diplomacy." This "deadly connection" between the nuclear buildup and interventionist foreign policies raises an obvious question. What, if any, nuclear forces does the United States need to defend itself against the Soviet Union, and which nuclear forces exist only to enhance U.S. interventionist capabilities? Like many others, we see no justification, based on the considerations of defending the United States, for the MX missile, the B-1 bomber, the Trident submarine, the Trident 2 missile or, more generally, for more than a submarine-based deterrent.

Several analysts have proposed military budgets based on the principles of defending the United States and not interfering in the affairs of other states. Once again, estimates are difficult, but one such budget, proposed by the Security Project of the World Policy Institute, estimates that by 1989 $125 billion could be saved annually from military spending by reducing the strategic nuclear forces to a submarine force (with nearly 6,000 warheads), reducing the number of ground divisions from twenty to twelve, eliminating eight aircraft carriers and fifty-one amphibious ships, reducing the Navy from 650 to 400 ships, and eliminating three of forty-four air wings. Some analysts committed to the same principles argue that smaller reductions are appropriate; others propose even larger reductions. Whatever their differences in matters of detail, however, all such proposals indicate that considerable resources are currently devoted to forces keyed to intervention, and therefore show as well that current policies in Central America and the Caribbean are not only another "dirty little war" waged by the United States against much smaller and less powerful nations, but the cutting edge of a massive military commitment. □

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GARY RIVLIN

Chicago

I voted for Mark Fairchild and Janice Hart, followers of Lyndon LaRouche Jr. who won the Democratic Party's nominations for lieutenant governor and secretary of state in the Illinois primary on March 18. It was not their pledges to screen all Illinois residents for AIDS or to set up tribunals around the state to prosecute "traitors" that won them my vote. Instead, I was voting against the regular Democratic candidates.

Hart's opponent in the race for secretary of state was Aurelia Pucinski. Her father, former State Representative Roman Pucinski, has been a Chicago Democratic machine stalwart for decades. Today he is an alderman, aligned with the white faction opposed to Mayor Harold Washington on the City Council, and one of the Mayor's most vociferous critics. Aurelia Pucinski's political career began two years ago, when the party endorsed her for a spot on the Metropolitan Sanitary District Board. Party leaders chose her to run for state office over the candidate of the party's women's caucus, a state representative with fine credentials. Who Hart was I didn't know, and, naïvely, I didn't much care.

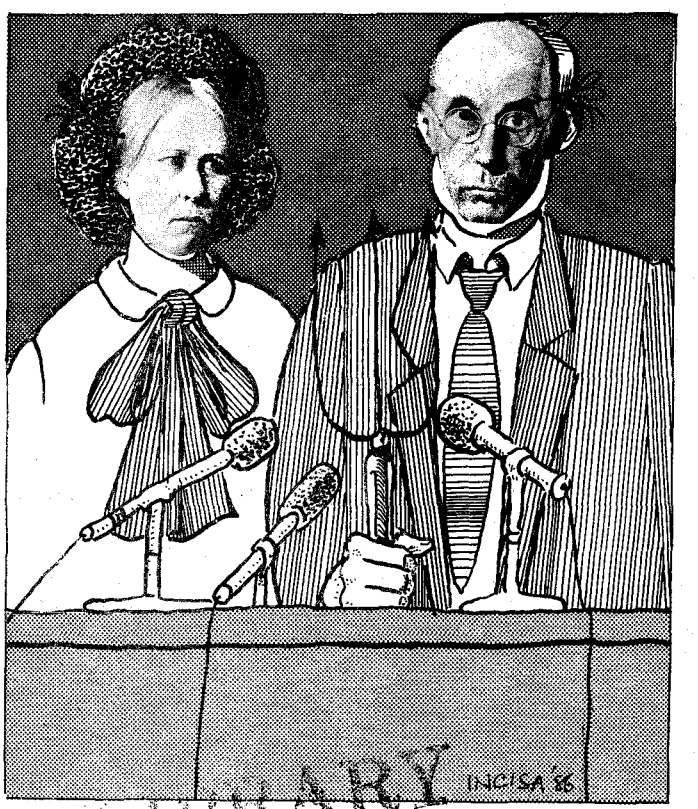
I didn't know Mark Fairchild either. But George Sangmeister, his opponent in the lieutenant governor's race, was anti-choice and had voted against the Equal Rights Amendment several times as a state legislator. Feminist groups that had hoped a woman would have a prominent spot on the state ticket were furious. Because a black woman, Carol Moseley Braun, had lost the endorsement to him, blacks also resented the choice of Sangmeister, and they voted against him convincingly. They also voted three to one against Pucinski—more than five to one in one black ward. Most white progressives I know either sat out the two races or voted for the LaRouchies in protest.

Not that Chicago blacks needed Aurelia Pucinski or George Sangmeister to alienate them from the Democratic Party. In Cook County it is dominated by the remnants of Chicago's once all-powerful Democratic machine and is headed by Alderman Edward Vrdolyak, Mayor Washington's chief foe. "What in the hell should we care about the endorsements of a party headed by Vrdolyak," a black alderman told me. "Most everyone who is paying attention is looking who to vote against." Washington did not endorse a candidate in either race.

Vrdolyak has done much to earn the wrath of black Chicago in his role as unquestioned leader of the City Council faction opposed to the city's first black mayor and also the first progressive in that office. Washington's troubles with the City Council began shortly after his election in 1983. At the first meeting after he took office the aldermen split into two camps—the "twenty-nine" and the "twenty-one," to use the local shorthand. All of the council's black aldermen are in the twenty-one, as are four anti-machine white aldermen, who predate Washington. The twenty-nine have enough votes to block or to pass any legislation, but they are five votes short of the thirty-four needed to override a veto. In the three years since Washington's victory, virtually every important issue before the City Council has ended in a 29-21 stalemate. We in Chicago call it Council Wars.

Consider the $94.7 million bond proposal to fix crumbling streets and sewers, first introduced in the Chicago City Council in early 1984. In years past the proposal would have been rubber-stamped, but it languished for eighteen months. Alderman Richard Mell told me that the bond was good for the entire city, but he opposed it because it was Washington's idea. "There are some who believe to get rid of Harold Washington is good government because we simply can't take four more years of him," Mell said. "Maybe . . . two years of not having this [bond] is worth ten years of political stability." Mell described himself as one of the "extreme hawks" among the twenty-nine "who don't want to give Harold anything, who want to drop a neutron bomb on City Hall."

"With this guy [Washington] there's no middle ground," he complained. "Either he gets 100 percent of what he wants or he vetoes it." To a certain extent, Mell is correct. Washington has been uncompromising. A candidate who ran on a reform platform, he has refused to emulate his predecessor, Jane Byrne, who within six months of her 1979 defeat of the machine cut a deal with Vrdolyak. This is what heartens Chicagoans dedicated to fighting the Democratic



Gary Rivlin writes regularly about city politics for the Chicago Reader.

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machine that dominated politics here for fifty years.

Winning a Council majority would have been as easy as steering some city business the way of the twenty-nine's preferred contractors and providing them some patronage. But Washington has eschewed patronage, earning the wrath not only of the twenty-nine but of many of the black aldermen among the twenty-one, who had looked forward to the day a black would become mayor and angle political spoils their way. City contracts are going to a wide range of businesses, particularly those owned by women and members of minority groups. Garbage trucks no longer service middle-class wards at the expense of poorer ones. City Hall does not retaliate against community organizations that oppose the administration or its allies—another trait that infuriates some black aldermen in Washington's coalition. But the Washington–Vrdolyak fight is so intense that no black alderman dares break ranks for fear of voter reprisals.

Washington, though, may achieve his Council majority after all. Last December, a Federal judge ordered special elections in seven of the city's fifty wards, because ward boundaries had been drawn so as to discriminate against blacks and Latinos. All seven wards had been represented by aldermen among the twenty-nine. The court-ordered elections were held in conjunction with the scheduled statewide primaries on March 18, and it appears that Washington may have won a working Council majority. He picked up two seats, and two others that are undecided will probably come to him. One of those will be determined in a runoff election on April 29 in the predominantly black fifteenth ward. The other will require a more complicated procedure. In the twenty-sixth ward, election officials placed Washington loyalist Luis Gutierrez ahead of his opponent by twenty votes, but a legal challenge is in progress, and a recount is expected.

Loss of their Council majority would be a sharp blow to Ed Vrdolyak and his minions. That twenty-sixth vote has enabled them to frustrate Washington's ability to control city government. For instance, three years after Washington's election, the Council's majority still refuses to confirm about fifty of his appointees to various local boards, commissions and councils. The Urban Renewal Board can't spend money on potential neighborhood projects because without two of Washington's appointments to it—known as the "hostages"—it doesn't have a quorum. A Washington majority should sit on the board that oversees the park system, but that would encroach on Park Commissioner Ed Kelly's fiefdom. In 1984, with Washington's appointments on hold, the sitting board extended Kelly's contract another four years.

That summer Council Wars reached a peak, as the twenty-nine made the first of numerous power plays for more control over city contracts. In July, a routine proposal to approve $820 million worth of revenue bonds came before the City Council so that various public works projects, including the $1.6 billion O'Hare International Airport expansion, could continue. The majority voted for the proposal but specified that the Council must O.K. all contracts parceled out under the terms of the bond. Washington vetoed this intrusion on his executive powers. The Council reapproved the proposal, and Washington vetoed it again. The newspapers frantically reported that the entire O'Hare project would soon shut down and thousands of jobs would be lost. Eventually the editorialists and columnists blamed the standoff on Vrdolyak's side, and the business community grudgingly came to the Mayor's aid. At the end of September the twenty-nine backed down.

Yet, in a way, the twenty-nine won. Even if the electorate blames both sides, it's Washington who loses, not Vrdolyak. A key swing bloc in the 1987 election (as it was in 1983) is expected to be the white liberals living along the city's lakefront. Sure, Washington is a reformer, those relatively open-minded voters are beginning to say, but how long can the city tolerate the continuous strife? Some liberal whites long associated with the fight against the Chicago political machine pushed Washington to accommodate the twenty-nine on the O'Hare dispute and have been pressuring him to be more accommodating in general. In response, Washington told supporters, "My name is not Monty Hall, and the name of the game is not Let's Make a Deal."

The twenty-nine try to create the impression that the Mayor is uninterested in the welfare of the white community—for example in the fight last spring over the disbursement of Federal poverty funds. Led by Aurelia Pucinski's dad, Roman, the twenty-nine tried to divert $14 million in Community Development Block Grant funds to their middle-class neighborhoods, arguing that the Mayor's spending plan shortchanged some of their wards. Of course it did; Federal rules are specific as to how the money is to be used. The Mayor vetoed their amendments, and round and round the two sides went. Only after deadlines and then extended deadlines were missed, 1,300 city workers were laid off, and an estimated 150 human service organizations had to close their doors, did the twenty-nine give in. They made their point, though: the black Mayor just wouldn't compromise.

Even if Washington wins his twenty-fifth seat, a Vrdolyak loyalist may continue to chair the Council's powerful Finance Committee, an important post for stalling legislation. Dirty tricks and low blows will continue. And the Vrdolyak forces will exploit the dissension within the black caucus that will threaten the Mayor's fragile majority.

The big winner on March 18 was Republican Governor James Thompson, whose re-election to a fourth term seems assured by the LaRouche debacle. With Adlai Stevenson's campaign in a shambles, the state's Democratic leaders must ponder the lessons of this extraordinary primary. Doubtless they will learn to scrutinize everyone who enters races for state office, and they will make certain that the names of regular candidates for every slot appear on the sample ballots. But there is a more important lesson to be learned as well. The old Chicago Democratic machine is broken and can no longer deliver elections. If state leaders continue to display contempt for Chicago's blacks and women in their choice of candidates, they may look forward to more defeats. □

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EGYPTIAN THRILLER

The Perils of Hosni Mubarak

STANLEY REED

President Hosni Mubarak of Egypt has emerged from February's rampage by his security police conscripts in better shape than many observers had expected. The revolt by the very people who are supposed to protect his regime might easily have dealt a fatal blow to confidence in Mubarak's authority; instead, the President was given credit for the military's speedy restoration of order and commended for permitting the Egyptian media to provide the public with full coverage of the disturbances. Even his normally vociferous critics now praise him for resisting the temptation—to which his predecessor Anwar el-Sadat often yielded—to make scapegoats of them. "I believe there was no involvement by any religious or leftist group or any other movement in what the police dared to do," Mubarak declared on March 10.

But it would be a mistake for us to draw too much comfort from the positive outcome. The rioting was the latest evidence that Egypt is enmeshed in a political and economic crisis which will require American attention. The regime has been shaken by a series of bizarre incidents that began with the Achille Lauro affair last October, and was followed by the bungled and bloody raid on the hijacked Egyptair plane on Malta and the murder of seven Israelis in Sinai by an Egyptian policeman, whom the opposition turned into a cult hero. On March 19 unknown assassins calling themselves Egypt's Revolution killed one Israeli diplomat and wounded three others in a street ambush. The government's seeming inability to protect Israelis in Egypt certainly does not bode well for warming up the cold peace between the two countries.

To compound Egypt's problems, the sharp decline in the country's foreign exchange earnings is crimping its ability to pay its rising import bills and service its staggering external debt. The resultant shortage of resources for domestic needs has put intolerable pressure on the millions of Egyptians who live below the poverty line, including the 300,000 draftees charged with guarding foreign embassies, government buildings and other strategic points.

According to the opposition newspapers, the rampaging conscripts were venting anger over wretched conditions, including their inadequate $4 monthly pay, which had recently been cut by 50 cents. "They didn't tell us the reason [for the cut]," a draftee told the opposition Socialist Labor Party weekly *Al-Shaab*, "but we knew it was to pay Egypt's debts." *Al-Shaab* reported that the troubles began in a camp near the Giza Pyramids when a large contingent of troops, scheduled to be discharged, were told by an officer that their terms were being extended for another year. Explaining the subsequent riot one of the soldiers said, "We remembered that our wives and families . . . were not satisfied with the pennies that represent our monthly salaries."

In a matter of hours the rebellion spread from Giza to police units posted in distant parts of greater Cairo, to Ismailia in the Suez Canal zone and to Sohag and Asyut in Upper Egypt. As many as 17,000 troops joined in, wildly firing their weapons and trashing and burning hotels, nightclubs, automobiles and other symbols of wealth. The government acknowledges that 107 persons died in the melee. That figure may be low, considering that the military used helicopter gunships against some of the rebels.

Even before the violence broke out, Mubarak knew he was sitting on an economic powder keg. The collapse of oil prices will cut by half earnings from Egypt's main export, which last year brought in $2.1 billion; reduce Suez Canal tolls; and diminish the remittances from Egyptians working in the Arab oil-producing countries. The recent riots have hurt tourism, Egypt's other major source of foreign exchange. All told, Mubarak faces an external financing gap

Stanley Reed is a writer who specializes on the Middle East.

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this year of at least $1 billion, and possibly much more. Because Egypt is already $1 billion in arrears on its loan payments, the only institutions that could lend him that much money are the Washington triumvirate: the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank and the U.S. government.

How should the Administration respond? There is no satisfactory answer. Egypt already receives $2.3 billion in U.S. aid each year. That amount, second only to what Israel receives, comes to more than 15 percent of all American foreign aid. The United States has already granted Mubarak an additional $500 million in emergency assistance. Giving more will likely mean throwing good money after bad. Despite the numerous claims to the contrary by both sides, the $20.2 billion allocated to Egypt since 1974 has merely cemented Egyptian dependence on the United States. Yet the disintegration of the Mubarak regime would threaten Egypt's delicate peace with Israel, so it may be worth risking a few more billions to keep him in power.

For years the United States and the international lending organizations have tried to make their aid conditional on Egypt's reducing the $5 billion per year it spends subsidizing food, fuel and electricity. They also want Cairo to reform the price-control system that hampers agricultural production and encourages industrial inefficiency on a colossal scale. Like his predecessor, Mubarak has agreed in principle to these suggestions, but he has put off making any substantive changes for fear of the public reaction. In his March 8 speech on the riots, he asked Egyptians not to take vacations abroad this summer, so as to conserve foreign exchange, and appealed to those working overseas to send more money home. Many observers think the President missed a rare opportunity, because the riots had prepared Egyptians to accept a tough reform program.

It would be remiss not to mention that an alternative to Mubarak with a dangerous appeal for American policymakers is emerging. He is Defense Minister Abdel Halim Abu Ghazala, who made many friends during his stint as military attaché in Washington under Sadat. Although there is no evidence that the United States is pushing for a change, it is fair to say that Abu Ghazala impresses some American officials as a more adept and decisive politician than the sometimes clumsy Mubarak. While Abu Ghazala disavows any intention to supersede the civilian authorities, the military's role in quelling the rioting made him a prominent figure, and he is likely to grow more powerful if there is more trouble in the streets.

Curiously, it is in this potential rivalry with Abu Ghazala that the experiment with democracy is beginning to pay dividends for Mubarak. Immediately after calling in the military, the President invited the leaders of the opposition parties to a highly publicized briefing on the situation. The purpose of that little exercise, which would never have occurred under either of his predecessors, was to preserve "a healthy balance between the military and civilian institutions," wrote Mohamed Sid-Ahmed in the leftist newspaper *al-Ahaly*. In Sid-Ahmed's view, Mubarak is using the opposition to restrain military ambitions. Whatever his strategy, Mubarak has certainly convinced the opposition groups that they have an interest in keeping him in power, if only to preserve the freedom of expression that they now enjoy. Their newspapers are trying to aid the struggling President by portraying Abu Ghazala as America's candidate and, therefore, suspect. □

Opposition

(*Continued From Front Cover*)

The Coordinadora has never made a serious effort to attract broad, popular backing for its demands. It has never organized a consistent program of political meetings—even indoor ones, which are legal. Not one of the four parties making up the C.D.N. has conducted a major recruiting drive. Some of them do not even keep records of their membership. As Miriam Arguello, a Coordinadora leader, explained in an interview, "We don't need to, we know the majority of the country already supports us." Yet until recently C.D.N. member parties did not have offices in every department in the country, and Mario Rappaccioli, millionaire boss of the Nicaraguan Conservative Party, said of the other three parties, "They have so few people I could fit them all in a bus."

The contrast between them and the Sandinistas could not be greater. Immediately after Anastasio Somoza fled the country, Sandinista leaders, working sixteen to twenty hours a day, toured the country, galvanizing support, setting up trade unions and mass organizations, forging a popular movement to back their claim to power. The opposition did virtually nothing. Instead, by mid-1980, long before anyone ever raised any complaints of harassment, the right's most popular and charismatic leader, Jorge Salazar, was plotting a coup d'état with anti-Sandinista officers in the army. He met with *contra* leaders in Miami and started smuggling guns. In November 1980 he was killed while being arrested by Nicaraguan police. In the few months before and after Somoza's fall, 20 to 30 percent of the country's businessmen emigrated, taking their expertise and hundreds of millions of dollars and depriving the opposition of their support.

Alfonso Robelo, after Salazar the only credible leader of the so-called democratic center, also gave up the struggle at an early stage. He was one of two original non-Sandinistas on the five-member governing junta that ran the country from 1979 to 1985, and the leader of the Nicaraguan Democratic Movement. His positions provided an ideal base from which to organize a democratic opposition, but instead Robelo resigned in April 1980, on the pretext that the Sandinistas had packed the consultative parliament, the Council of State, with their supporters. Opposition leaders now admit that the 25 percent of the seats allocated to them was more than they could then have won in an election. In November 1980, the six

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delegates from the Superior Council of Private Enterprise, or COSEP, the private businessmen's group, walked out of the Council of State, never to return. And so another platform from which to launch an effective democratic opposition was lost. In June 1982, Robelo joined the *contra* commander Edén Pastora, leaving the Coordinadora leaderless.

What had the Sandinistas done to justify this intransigence? Their treatment of the opposition over the past six years stands in stark contrast to that in El Salvador, Guatemala and even Honduras. In Nicaragua no death squads have been at work, cases of torture have been isolated, political leaders do not disappear, no one receives death threats. Comparatively speaking, Nicaragua has been a beacon of human rights in the region.

In Nicaragua there are ten legal political parties, ranging from the loony left to the rabid right. They all have offices, telephones and vehicles. Managua is studded with party billboards carrying messages like "Conservatism means free trade unions." Opposition leaders attend small political meetings without bodyguards; they don't need them. In their November 1984 elections Nicaraguans were offered a broader ideological choice than Americans were in theirs.

To be sure, the Sandinistas have harassed the opposition: prominent C.D.N. members have been arrested and even jailed, sometimes without benefit of trial. During one invasion scare, Coordinadora leaders were barred from leaving the country. *La Prensa* has been consistently and crudely censored. Opponents have been roughed up by Sandinista mobs and their property has been confiscated. Such incidents are deplorable and have rightly been condemned by human rights organizations, including Amnesty International and Americas Watch. But do they justify abandoning the democratic struggle and joining the *contra* murderers? The abuses have been of civil, not human rights—a fine distinction, but an important one in the regional context.

By the same token, the opposition has rarely challenged Sandinista controls. It has never organized general strikes or regular protest demonstrations. Of course such activities are illegal under the current State of Emergency, but if the army and death squads have been unable to halt union and protest activity in El Salvador and Guatemala, what explains the passivity in Nicaragua, where the Sandinistas have never used the police or troops to suppress a strike? Perhaps the C.D.N. does not have the support it claims?

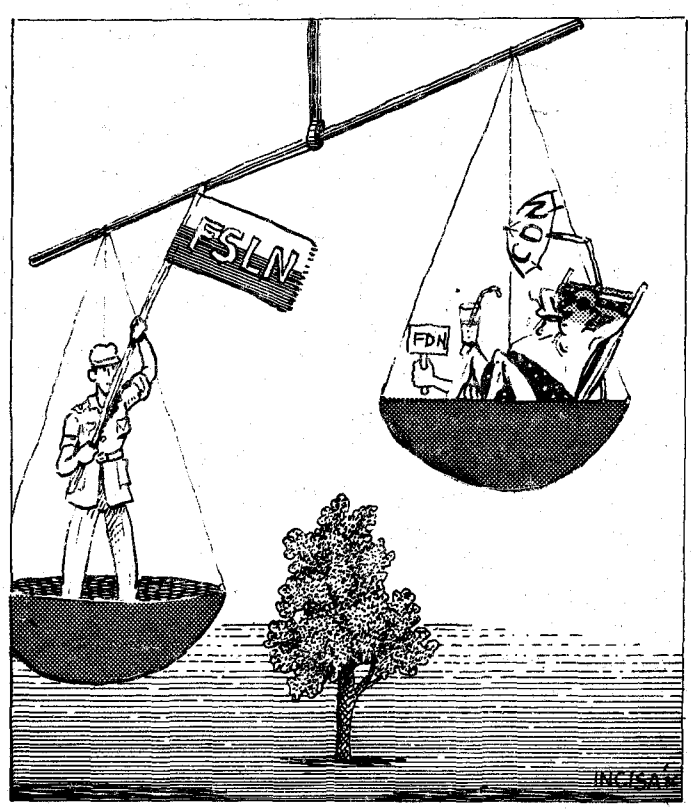
Nor has the right offered any alternative program. The C.D.N. does not have a detailed policy on such important issues as health care and land reform, or even on how to end the war. The three most influential voices in the Coordinadora are wealthy businessmen Enrique Bolaños, Ramiro Gurdian and Mario Rappaccioli, who speak for the old conservative landed aristocracy. Rappaccioli is so right-wing that he once said, "all the American media, especially *The Washington Post*, are communist." The C.D.N.'s policy can be summed up in one sentence: Under the Americans everything will be fine. It is not surprising that most Nicaraguans cannot name the C.D.N.'s leaders, or that those leaders are popularly referred to as "the same people who used to make deals with Somoza."

The intellectual bankruptcy of the right is reflected in the fact that its generally recognized leader is a cleric, Cardinal Obando y Bravo, and he has been powerless to stop the constant factional squabbling: the Conservative Party has split four times in the past three years. Because it lacked a politician of stature, the Coordinadora was obliged to import Arturo Cruz from Washington as its putative presidential candidate in 1984. That candidacy was nothing more than a propaganda ploy; Rappaccioli has admitted that the C.D.N. voted to boycott the elections before Cruz returned to Managua.

Cruz was an unsuitable leader for several reasons. A dry, uninspiring economist, he is relatively little known in Nicaragua, having spent most of his adult life in the United States. Also, he and his son had been working closely with Edén Pastora long before the elections. But Cruz's worst fault was his own admission, after the polling, that he had accepted money from the Central Intelligence Agency.

Within two days of his arrival in Managua, Cruz revealed that he did not understand democratic struggle: he announced that the sine qua non for C.D.N.'s participation in the elections was negotiations between the Sandinistas and the *contra* leaders. "Many are my friends, I could not participate knowing they could not," he said. The demand for negotiations, as many European diplomats complained, had nothing to do with the mechanics of free and fair elections; it should have been the centerpiece of the C.D.N. campaign platform.

The elections provided the Coordinadora with an opportunity to make up lost ground—a chance for television and radio air time, relaxed censorship and outdoor rallies throughout the country. The Sandinista's control of the government undoubtedly gave their party, the Sandinista



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National Liberation Front, an unfair advantage in the campaign, but no serious commentator has questioned the honesty of the polling, and the vast majority of the observers accepted the validity of the results. By boycotting the elections, the C.D.N. again rejected the opportunity to participate in a National Assembly and to build up their support.

One explanation for the C.D.N. boycott is that its leaders are dominated by the old mentality, forged in the days of dealing with Somoza, that political change is achieved in secret meetings in smoke-filled rooms. They have no experience in campaigning for votes. They rely, as Nicaragua's aristocracy always has, on the U.S. Embassy to apply pressure for change. Coordinadora leaders continuously tour European and U.S. capitals; Washington is more the C.D.N.'s constituency than *contra*-battered Wiwili. Ramiro Gurdian is so proud of the U.S. link that he once boasted in an interview: "Reagan's peace proposals are taken from the Coordinadora. I am going to charge him royalties." That's hardly necessary. The C.D.N. already receives funds from Reagan, as does *La Prensa*. Both receive thousands of dollars from the National Endowment for Democracy, a group formed by Congress that grants money to anti-communist organizations in foreign countries.

Part of the Coordinadora's problem is that its leaders have never held nationalist views. As Agustin Jarquin, former president of the Social Christian Party, admits, "In Nicaragua there was never a national bourgeoisie." Many politicians on the right were educated in the United States, some have second homes there and speak fluent English, some used to work for American firms and felt their first allegiance was to the United States. They speak Washington's language, which accounts for why such a small group has attracted so much attention in the nation's capital. Yet the C.D.N. is unable to comprehend that U.S. policy is designed to reduce the space for dissidence and opposition in Nicaragua in order to force the Sandinistas to restrict civil liberties, thus providing an excuse for further U.S. aggression.

THE OPPOSITION SPEAKS

§ Jaime Chamorro, an editor of the anti-Sandinista newspaper *La Prensa*: "Our fight is the same as the F.D.N.'s. It is like the difference between an infantry and an air force; two arms of the same thing. . . . Editorially we do not support the *contras*' war; maybe we do personally, individually, but our official position is not pro-*contra* . . . but [the fight for democracy] can be won only by taking up arms. A government can be changed only by a conjunction of factors: the military, the international, the diplomatic, the church, the press."

§ Bishop Pablo Antonio Vega, spokesman for the Nicaraguan Episcopal Conference, on Reagan's $100 million aid request: "The oppressed have the right to look for aid wherever they can find it."

And the C.D.N. also has links to the *contras*. Not only are the leaders of the two groups good friends; they meet regularly and have even shared press conferences. Adolfo Calero, leader of the Nicaraguan Democratic Force, once described the Coordinadora, of which he was formerly a senior member, as "my political wing." Significantly, the C.D.N. leaders have never renounced armed opposition by condemning the *contra* massacres, kidnappings, rapes and economic sabotage; nor has the Catholic hierarchy led by Obando.

Indeed, Obando has always been an implacable opponent of the Sandinistas. Two days before Somoza fell the Cardinal was in Caracas, Venezuela, trying to persuade President Luis Herrera Campins to force the Sandinistas to install two more conservatives on the junta. More than 110 priests, nuns and religious workers suspected of sympathizing with the Sandinistas have been forced out of their jobs. And he has encouraged priests to break the law by preaching against the military draft. Many clerics suspect that he welcomes this confrontation as a way of discrediting the Sandinistas.

But the final failure of the right is its adamant refusal to accept the legitimacy of the revolution and its institutions. In a pluralistic democracy a majority of the political parties must accept the society's fundamental institutions; they may want to change them, but they accept them as a framework in which they must operate. The Nicaraguan right does not. It rejects the executive, the bureaucracy, the legislature, the judiciary, the army, the police force, the education system, the health-care system, the banking system—everything. It refuses to work from within to change them. When given the chance to do so, it boycotts, resigns, runs away. The right is not a loyal opposition, and if Nicaragua is not a working pluralistic democracy that is partly because the leaders of the C.D.N. are such bad democrats.

Sergio Ramírez, the Vice President, once said in an interview that the government needs more and better criticism. A good opposition helps bring about good government, and the lack of one has caused the Sandinistas to make some bad mistakes. Moreover, by not helping to build an effective democracy, the C.D.N. has provided the Reagan Administration with an excuse for backing the *contras* now ravaging the Nicaraguan countryside.

Those who argue that the Sandinistas have used their monopoly of power to harass a weak and useless opposition should remember that more than 60 percent of the economy is in private hands. As long as that situation continues, and there is no evidence that it will change in the near future, the socialist Sandinista government and the conservative pro-U.S. opposition will continue to struggle for power. It may be that in the years ahead the Sandinistas will prove to be totalitarian Leninists, determined to impose a centralized one-party state, but at the moment there is space to work for pluralism. The C.D.N.'s ineffectuality merely encourages U.S. policy; the Sandinistas' current siege mentality understandably pushes them to take more restrictive measures, which then "justify" increased U.S. aggression. It is no wonder that President Reagan wants to "strengthen the democratic center." □

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Politics From A Different Position

COMMUNISM—Part II

It is difficult to determine to what extent the Soviet leaders are in touch with reality. From what we see of their behavior it would appear that they believe that the economics of "Marxism-Leninism" is still alive today. By their actions we must conclude that they have yet to learn that "Marxism-Leninism" died at precisely 5:29:45 A.M., July 16, 1945 on the deserts of Alamogordo. At that moment economics lost its national boundaries. Also what disappeared into the clouds of strontium 90 was the existence of national defense. Not today, not tomorrow, not ever again can there be a national defense. What remains now is life, or in the alternative, the extinction of life.

Some of us are still inclined to speak of war as if it were a meaningful word. It was meaningful before Alamogordo. It is no longer meaningful. What we as a nation experienced in Vietnam was not a war. What we are experiencing in Central America is not war. What the Soviets are experiencing in Afghanistan is not war. What is occurring in the Middle East is not war. These are organized killings of human beings instigated by leaders who have failed to learn the lessons of history and whose minds are in the past.

The Soviet leaders have a serious problem the significance of which does not seem to enter their frame of reference. The problem is that they misunderstand the meaning of the behavior of our leaders, but think they understand. They see how our country continues to build and build and build massive instruments of annihilation. And they *class-angle* the meaning of these activities a la "Marxism-Leninism." They really believe that our intent is to use them against their country and their people. What they cannot believe nor understand is that we never will. According to their logic, why make them if you don't intend to use them. They tell us they will never use them first. *We* refuse to say that.

Another serious problem bothers the Soviets. They want substantive discussions and agreements on banning nuclear testing but the present Administration stonewalls. And here again the Soviets don't understand why. Previous attempts at negotiation failed because we complained that they were cheaters. Now they say, come on over; make yourselves at home; see what we are doing; do all the inspecting you like. We say, nothing doing, you're hiding something up your sleeve. If the Soviets would not depend upon their scriptures and would look at the facts for what they really are, they would understand that this Administration cannot *afford* to agree with the Soviets on anything other than just talking, smiling, shaking hands, and taking pictures.

Any kind of substantive political agreement between the United States and the Soviet Union would lead to a decrease in tension between the two powers. A decrease in tension would lead to a decrease in government spending and that would be as welcome to the Administration as tossing a monkey wrench into the wheels of industry. Our economy must continue to hum. In order for it to continue to hum we must continue in the direction for which industry has been tooled. What the Soviets cannot see, and they cannot see because they don't understand, not having experienced it, and that is the meaning of the word *plenty*. Yes, of course, they know the word *plenty*. But to them *plenty* means snow, vodka, bureaucracy, authority, ineptitude. It is not our meaning of *plenty*. To us *plenty* means everything we need, more than we need; everything we want, more than we want. *That* meaning the Soviets cannot understand. They refuse to believe that there is such a land where this really exists, where people are consistently badgered to buy, buy, buy.

Our industries are highly specialized, so specialized that those industries tooled for producing nuclear warheads could not be converted to making shoes. And why make more shoes when we already have so many of them? If we stop making nuclear warheads what would these industries do? It is one thing to start something. But once started, especially government spending, it is almost impossible to stop. This the Soviets don't understand and they don't understand on two counts: (1) they don't have enough shoes and (2) the Soviet economy does not operate on profit.

So we see that the United States cannot afford to be friendly toward the Soviet Union for economic and psychological reasons, but because *we* cannot be friendly does not mean that the Soviets cannot be friendly toward the United States. What the Soviet leaders must understand is that they, and they alone, now stand on the threshold of history; that they, and they alone, are now in a position to save mankind from destruction; that they and only they can bring peace and stability to

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the world. Why only they? The United States of America cannot do that. We cannot do that because ours is a free and open society. In our country everyone talks; everyone has an opinion. We have opinion poles. Our leaders are not leaders. They are followers. They follow the opinion poles. Our government rules by the majority. The majority is comprised of pressure groups. In most matters our people are politically naive. Most of our people are first millenium people. Although we have the wealth, the military power, the technology, the surpluses, we are not a consensus-oriented society. The majority is not always constructive.

The Soviet leaders, on the other hand, do not have to contend with opinion poles. They make their own. They have a free hand. They can do what they want to do. They don't have to answer to pressure groups. The first thing they should do is to turn to their own native geniuses who can teach them that Marx and Lenin were wrong about man. They should examine the work of P.D. Ouspensky, study his Tertium Organum and learn about man's true nature, his biology, his psychology. They should delve into the work of Ivan Petrovitch Pavlov where they will understand the true meaning of conditioned reflex and through that meaning understand why Marx and Lenin were wrong.

From the study of biology we see that man is motivated by two fundamental, unconscious human drives — self-preservation and species-preservation. We see also that nature is most fecund in the production of life and most parsimonious in the production of brain power; that man is not homogeneous and cannot be pigeonholed into a prestructured mold; that the needs of humans vary individually as well as collectively; that humans are an acquisitive breed and that the acquisitive nature and drive would be directly proportional to the brain power. Thus the philosophers of yore, though they had the brain power, lacked the knowledge power. As a result of that lack they concocted a world of fantasy, a world into which man simply would not fit.

The first step the Soviet leaders should take should be to retire their *class-anglers*.

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BOOKS & THE ARTS.

The Defense of Good Ideas

CASEY BLAKE

THE CASE OF THE BAFFLED RADICAL. *By Harold Rosenberg. University of Chicago Press. 293 pp. $25.*

Someone searching for the exact moment when high Modernism in the visual arts gave way to Postmodernism would do well to look at Robert Rauschenberg's *Erased de Kooning Drawing* of 1953. With a knowing nod to Marcel Duchamp's mustache on the *Mona Lisa*, Rauschenberg shrugged off the obsessive self-consciousness and formal concerns of Abstract Expressionism and, as it were, erased the whole bloody business from memory. In an atmosphere of almost stultifying cultural seriousness, he recovered the black humor of Dada and aimed it at the founding father of a movement that had seen painting as the last preserve of the human spirit. In erasing de Kooning's drawing, Rauschenberg was also erasing the border between vanguard and popular culture that Abstract Expressionists had been busy patrolling since the late 1930s. As every museum curator will tell you, the rest was history: an explosion of artistic movements in the 1960s and after filled the galleries with the artifacts of a "new pluralism."

To Postmodern enthusiasts, Rauschenberg's gesture must seem like a liberating moment. Harold Rosenberg, the critic who spent much of his life promoting the work of the artist Rauschenberg erased, saw things differently. By the late 1960s, it was clear to him that comparisons between gestures like Rauschenberg's and the Dadaist war against academic art were completely mistaken. Duchamp's mustache on the *Mona Lisa* and his "ready-made" sculptures challenged the bourgeois elevation of art to a realm separate from, and ultimately irrelevant to, everyday life. Such works struck at the heart of the ideology of the museum as a secular chapel for esthetic contemplation. *Erased de Kooning Drawing*, Rosenberg argued, had exactly the opposite impact: "The bland display by conservative curators of relics of subversion," he wrote, "has the effect of heightening the cohesion of the art world."

Rauschenberg did indeed open up a new era in American art, but it was one in which the agency of the artist fell victim to the public relations machinery of the official art world, which alone gave meaning to his gesture. In this "post-vanguard" situation, as Rosenberg called it, "the power of defining art is vested in art history, whose physical embodiment is the museum." "Having left the rebellious semi-underworld of bohemia," he wrote, art "has become a profession taught at universities, supported by a public, discussed in the press, and encouraged by the government." The new pluralism has obscured the coming of age of a cultural system that can easily dispense with artists and even art itself. Self-referentiality in modern art, once the result of attention to artistic media, now derives from a cultivated atmosphere of professionalism, which has itself become the real object of display. As Rosenberg recognized, neo-Dadaist appeals to an "anti-art" cannot threaten the new officialdom. The epitome of the contemporary museum would be walls hung with erased masterworks of the ages and a gift shop stocked with reproductions of the originals.

Harold Rosenberg was an unlikely source for such an indictment of the new artistic professionalism. He was, after all, a member in very good standing (second only to Clement Greenberg) of the postwar community of New York critics and artists. His prolific production of essays for *Partisan Review*, *Commentary*, *Dissent*, *The New Yorker* and a host of other high- and middlebrow publications, as well as his many published books, catalogues and collections, had done as much as any critical writing (again, Greenberg's excepted) to carve out a space for Modernist art in the United States. As a champion of such first-generation New York School painters as de Kooning, Pollock, Rothko, Gorky, Kline and Newman, Rosenberg had drawn out the significance of Abstract Expressionism as a historical and political phenomenon in a way that Greenberg's largely formalist esthetics never could. Moreover, his clever aphorisms and phrases—"the tradition of the new" and "action painting" being the most famous—provided viewers with verbal pegs for making sense of the difficult and obscure objects that America's best artists were producing after the war.

Ironically, the post-vanguard establishment Rosenberg deplored in the 1960s had cut its teeth on his columns. Its members saw Rosenberg as the defender of unrestrained spontaneity in painting, the critic who had taught them to look at a canvas "as an arena in which to act" and who urged them to think of painting as an "event" in the biography of the artist. Greenberg tried to subsume all of Modernism in an evolutionary process leading to two-dimensional flatness, but not Rosenberg. He knew that the Abstract Expressionists had made painting "a gesture of liberation" from history, an existential embrace of freedom that once and for all banished the false distinction between art and life. Why then was he so hostile to the collective liberation that followed Rauschenberg's erasing "event" and culminated in Pop, Op, Minimalism, happenings, Conceptual Art and the rest? Why couldn't he get over Abstract Expressionism and enjoy the show like everyone else?

One reason Rosenberg's critics found his position in the late sixties so incomprehensible is that they had misunderstood the main thrust of his work from the start. Thanks to the University of Chicago Press, which has reissued seven volumes of Rosenberg's critical essays and published two more volumes of previously uncollected work, it is now becoming possible to understand his theory of Modernist art. What emerges from this complex and varied body of writing is Rosenberg's lifelong insistence that the importance of the Modernist movement lay not in its appeals to the unrestrained subject but in its consciousness of its own historical conditions, which sharply limited the possibility of human freedom. As he wrote of Arshile Gorky in an essay reprinted in *The Case of the Baffled Radical*, the Modernist artist was "a man stuck with the history and the art of our time and *conscious of being stuck*." The "gesture of liberation" Rosenberg celebrated in action painting was a bid for freedom

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that made sense only because of the oppressive forces in advanced industrial society that had blighted other forms of action. "Only the blank canvas," he wrote in *The Anxious Object*, "offered the opportunity for a doing that would not be seized upon in mid-motion by the depersonalizing machine of capitalist society, or by the depersonalizing machine of the world-wide opposition to that society." The real problem in modern culture was not self-liberation—which as a political option was effectively foreclosed for the time being, and as a purely personal option was a delusion—but "self-location." To locate the self in the modern world was to acknowledge its limits, to realize that one was stuck within those limits and then to exploit the spaces they left open as a way of transcending them. Modernist art always meant more than the solution of formal esthetic problems; it was "the one opportunity that human beings have within our society to make something themselves and in that way make their own selves."

Rosenberg's insistence on the recognition of historical limits explains what at first glance are the most perplexing aspects of his position: his belief that Modernism generally and Abstract Expressionism in particular were political, even *radical* movements, and his polemic against the image of the artist as a romantic embodiment of unbridled spirit and individual revolt. Artists and critics who denied the social and political context of Modernism were guilty, he claimed, of "an arid professionalism" that rendered art a harmless "social resource" to be celebrated, catalogued and safely filed away. A truly political art embodied the artist's self-consciousness about the historical pressures that shaped his or her work, that closed off certain modes of expression while freeing others and that, in the twentieth century, acted mostly as obstacles to a comfortable self-location in society. This essentially dialectical view of Modernist art ruled out easier and more popular alternatives. The problem of "self-location" could not be wished away either by identifying the artist with larger social forces or by celebrating art as an autonomous realm of pure possibility. If, as Rosenberg believed, Modernism was a *historical* fact with roots in the social and political changes and betrayals of the last two centuries, then its portrait of personal dislocation and limited freedom revealed a crisis that required solutions both inside and outside

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the canvas. "No substantial problem of art is soluble by art alone," he explained, only technical ones.

As the last volume of previously uncollected essays and interviews in the Chicago series, *The Case of the Baffled Radical* is not the most appropriate introduction to Rosenberg's thought; *The Tradition of the New* and *The Anxious Object* are better places to start. It's easy to see why some of the pieces were never collected previously. The interviews in particular have an ephemeral, almost anecdotal quality when read outside the context of Rosenberg's larger *oeuvre*. At best, they confirm Rosenberg's image as a feisty, tough-minded loner in an art world given over to platitudes and self-congratulation. As one interviewer recites his litany of everything he considers positive in the art world—more museums, more galleries, a public that's "more free to decide what to paint about"—Rosenberg interrupts to remind him of the need to think critically about the situation. "Everything is hunky-dory," he responds, "except nobody has good ideas." *The Case of the Baffled Radical* is above all a defense of good ideas, and *critical* ideas, in art and culture. The collection is most valuable for Rosenberg's responses to the work of thinkers like Paul Goodman, F.R. Leavis, Georg Lukács and Marshall McLuhan, which help situate him in the context of the great cultural debates of this century.

Given Rosenberg's own interests, it's not surprising that his encounters with Leavis's *Scrutiny* and Lukács's *The Meaning of Contemporary Realism* form the intellectual core of the collection. Like Rosenberg, both Leavis and Lukács approached the Modernist movement in literature in reaction to efforts in the 1930s to subsume literature in a radical project of social transformation. While the failure of such efforts drove the conservative Leavis to an aristocratic cultivation of taste and the Marxist Lukács to a defense of nineteenth-century "bourgeois realism," Rosenberg remained faithful to the idea that a radical culture must exist in a state of tension with its historical environment. The essays on his two antagonists arrive at a startling and brilliant conclusion. Despite their obvious political differences, Leavis and Lukács were intellectual comrades in their inability to accept the historical necessity of Modernism. Denying any inescapable relationship between Modernism and modern society, both men claimed to open literature up to other, more humanistic alternatives. In reality, Rosenberg argued, these critics erected a new dogmatism that dictated to artists and writers with a vengeance, trapping them in a situation far more constraining than that imposed by history.

Leavis's *Scrutiny* was a perfect example of how an apparently apolitical emphasis on "strictly literary standards" was itself a political response to the situation of the conservative anti-Modernist in the twentieth century. By restricting the Modernist canon to a brief moment, running roughly from Eliot to Lawrence, and then defining that moment purely in terms of literary "inwardness," Leavis drained modern literature of its disturbing commentary on contemporary culture. "Entirely lacking in his imagination is any sense of the objective drama of modern life," Rosenberg charged, "the struggle in it between reality and possibility." Leavis's academic Modernism elevated the critic over the literary artist and a "'correct' way of reading" over the writer. The result was to make Modernism a manifesto for professional critics, "a program for seizing power through approved readings of John Donne." Under Leavis's tutelage, the Modernist revolt against the academy had become its opposite. As Rosenberg put it, "Leavis embraced the Modernist revolution in order to bring it to an end."

Lukács receives equally tough treatment in this collection. What most appalled Rosenberg about Lukács's late esthetics was its idealist demand "that conditions be cured in literature before they are changed in life." "For Marx," he wrote, "all that was solid was melting in the air; for Lukács it has no right to do that in the novel." Lukács's appeals to realism amounted, in practice, to an insistence that writers endow their characters with a comfortable, unified sense of selfhood that Rosenberg saw as an anachronism. For Rosenberg, the "modern *angst*" that Lukács decried in twentieth-century literature was itself a realistic, if ambivalent, answer to "the slipping away of established emblems of self." Lukács's "literary version of the Leninist program" was an avoidance of history: "The anonymous person and anonymous groups struggling for visibility in modern mass society are to be overlooked by literature until a place has been delineated for them by political authority." As with Leavis, Lukács's answer to the historical predicament of

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the self was a recourse to a professional vanguard endowed with the power to remake art and literature in the image of its criticism. An apparent liberation from history and its discontents had once again limited the possibilities of artistic freedom.

It's in this context that Rosenberg's dissenting position within New York's art scene becomes understandable. What Leavis and Lukács had achieved from conservative and orthodox-Marxist positions, Rosenberg now saw occurring under the aegis of liberal notions of "pluralism" in the visual arts. The explosion of new styles in the 1960s, duly attended by all the organs of mass publicity and marketing, represented less a liberation of the artist from the burdensome heritage of high Modernism than it did the new power of "post-vanguard" professionals, dealers and museum curators. Rosenberg sometimes overstated his case, implying that Abstract Expressionism was the only appropriate response to the ambiguities of modern "self-location." But his suspicion of the public relations cant of artistic pluralism remains a healthy corrective to the current celebration of Postmodernism and its multiplicity of discourses. Rosenberg's assertion that "art has become more and more difficult precisely because it has become more and more difficult for individuals to exist" returns the analysis of modern art to the historical issues of power and organization that are inseparable from its creation. Attempts to brush aside such questions in favor of more cheerful alternatives only reinforce the power of those who would run modern culture like a fashion magazine. "Political consciousness is a necessity for art," Rosenberg said elsewhere. "The alternative is to be satisfied to make decorations for office buildings and treasures for speculators." □

Proles and Prom Kings

THOMAS M. DISCH

WHERE WATER COMES TOGETHER WITH OTHER WATER. *By Raymond Carver. Random House. 130 pp. $13.95. Vintage. Paper $6.95.*

CATS OF THE TEMPLE. *By Brad Leithauser. Alfred A. Knopf. 70 pp. $14.95. Paper $7.95.*

When, in praising a poet, it is said that he has "found his own voice," what is usually meant is that he has developed a manner of self-dramatization sufficiently consistent that a single persona seems to be the source of all his poems. "Voice" in this sense equates with a manner of delivery, a stance, a style that the audience may not share but that it can at least recognize from a distance, like a traffic sign. Raymond Carver is a poet who sings the song of himself with a consistency and confidence that leaves us in no doubt at all as to what it's like to be Raymond Carver, a task made easier by virtue of the short stories he's written, many of which reflect the same experiences that the poems assure us have been his. He has been a drunk, but, redeemed by a good woman's love, now lives each day as it comes. He likes to hunt and fish (indeed, nothing else seems to get him out-of-doors). He worries that his children will come to no good like him and his old man, and, lest we forget, he worries a lot about death, as in the conclusion to a short poem cataloguing his favorite fears:

> Fear of waking up to find
> you gone.
> Fear of not loving and
> fear of not loving
> enough.
> Fear that what I love will
> prove lethal to
> those I love.
> Fear of death.
> Fear of living too long.
> Fear of death.
> I've said that.
>
> ("Fear")

Carver's poems are usually short, telling anecdotes from his life told in a no-bullshit tone of barroom confidentiality, as if by a country-western Marmeládov. His heart is always on his sleeve, whether he is apostrophizing his married daughter:

> You're a beautiful
> drunk, daughter.
> But you're a drunk. I
> can't say you're

Thomas M. Disch's latest collection of poetry, Here I Am, There You Are, Where Were We? *(Hutchinson), was the Poetry Book Society Choice in 1985.*

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breaking
my heart. I don't have a
heart when it
comes
to this booze thing. Sad,
yes. Christ alone
knows . . .
("To My Daughter")

or recounting a late-night phone call from an old drinking companion:

I love you, Bro, you
said.
And then a sob passed
between us. I took
hold
of the receiver as if
it were my buddy's arm.
And I wished for us both
I could put my arms
around you, old friend.
I love you too, Bro.
I said that, and then we
hung up.
("The Old Days")

Readers who don't suffer toxic reactions to Carver's mixture of machismo and vulnerability may enjoy his poems for their anecdotal value. He tells good stories, has an easygoing sense of humor and usually a little more verbal crackle than those excerpts indicate. There will be some readers for whom Carver may serve as a role model (the commonest purpose of poetry in our time), but his audience is more likely to be those like myself who only imagine the honky-tonk half of the world. Charles Bukowski's poetry has similar appeal, and indeed its voyeuristic attraction is even greater, since Bukowski is an unreformed reprobate with claims to being America's premier dirty old man. Bukowski reveals himself as one might by opening a trenchcoat; Carver's self-revelations have more the character of testimony at an A.A. meeting. Potentially Carver's poems could be as popular as those of Robert Service—and for not dissimilar reasons.

When Brad Leithauser's first collection of poems, *Hundreds of Fireflies*, appeared in 1982, he was generally acclaimed as the Prom King of American poetry. As the first poet to advertise himself as a yuppie, Leithauser became the spokesman for the Ivy League gentry who had once *owned* poetry, along with the other arts, and then seen it taken over by successive immigrant hordes. Leithauser is too much a gentleman to inveigh against any minority's aspirations, but in the autobiographical centerpiece poem of that first collection, "Two Summer Jobs," he celebrates his talent, his job in a Wall Street law firm and his $200 suits as candidly as Bukowski would a six-pack. Many readers found his candor beguiling, and even those too spiritual or too genteel to approve overt paeans to class advantage could admire the young urbane professional qua poet. Here were formal poems produced on a variety of templates, witty when wit was called for, and uniformly well crafted, some exquisitely so.

In his second collection, *Cats of the Temple*, Leithauser has decided to concentrate exclusively on being exquisite. Though the circumstances of his life are richer than ever (he has spent several years in Japan at the Kyoto Comparative Law Center), we only learn of this in a postscriptive author's note, not in his poems, or not directly. He does some Japanese "scenes," but they are as generic in their *japonaiserie* as any painted fan. Nature has taken over, and Nature, for Leithauser, comprises zoos, formal gardens and vacation spots—even the very benches in those environs where earlier poets have been known to sit and write their poems. He has no anecdotes to tell, and his jokes fall as flat as the following bit of sub-Ogden Nash:

Poet's Lament

Why must gainful
Employment be so painful?
("Minims")

When he's in his exquisite vein, he can still gild refined gold, but too often his diction gets knotty in proportion as the thought is thin.

For all that this particular (very slim) volume is a disappointment, and for all that Carver's was consistently more readable, Leithauser's awareness of the formal demands and possibilities of language—and even his willingness to do without the charms of blarney—bode well for his future. Having left off being "Brad Leithauser," he is in a good position to become a poet. □

Ho, Ho, Ho Chi Minh

SAUL LANDAU

ANATOMY OF A WAR: Vietnam, the United States and the Modern Historical Experience. *By Gabriel Kolko. Pantheon. 611 pp. $25.*

The recriminations began even before the last U.S. troops left Vietnam. Since 1974 angry and frustrated veterans, generals and right-wing ideologues have tried to frame the debacle as a self-inflicted defeat. They have alternately blamed Congress, liberals, the media and all weak-willed Americans easily seduced by guilt. From the White House to *The New Republic*, the question has become, Who lost Vietnam?

In such times, it is illuminating to read a book that sets the Vietnam War in the context of a history that began long before the United States intervened and will continue after Americans have finished refighting the war in print. Gabriel Kolko's dynamic account treats the war as a watershed of modern history, a time and place where the two main political currents of the twentieth century fought it out. The United States, the "major inheritor of the mantle of imperialism," set out "quickly to redress many of the postwar global dilemmas and frustrations of its military power, to confirm its symbolic credibility and the technical efficiency of its arms." The ultimate goal was "to neutralize the rising potential throughout the Third World for revolutionary nationalist regimes." Kolko's analysis is supported by impeccable scholarship and a wealth of historical data, much of it new.

For all the vituperative chronicles of battles, strategies and numbers of Vietcong, no serious history has been written of the Vietnamese Communist Party, the supposed winner of the conflict. Kolko fills this void and offers an invaluable account of the party's development, based on interviews with leading players and on previously unexamined documents. He takes the reader from the party's "costly period of youthful errors" in the 1931 peasant revolt to its maturity during Japanese wartime occupation, explaining in the process its changing relationship to other movements. The Vietnamese Communist leaders, he points out, had learned their Marxism

Saul Landau is a senior fellow at the Institute for Policy Studies in Washington.

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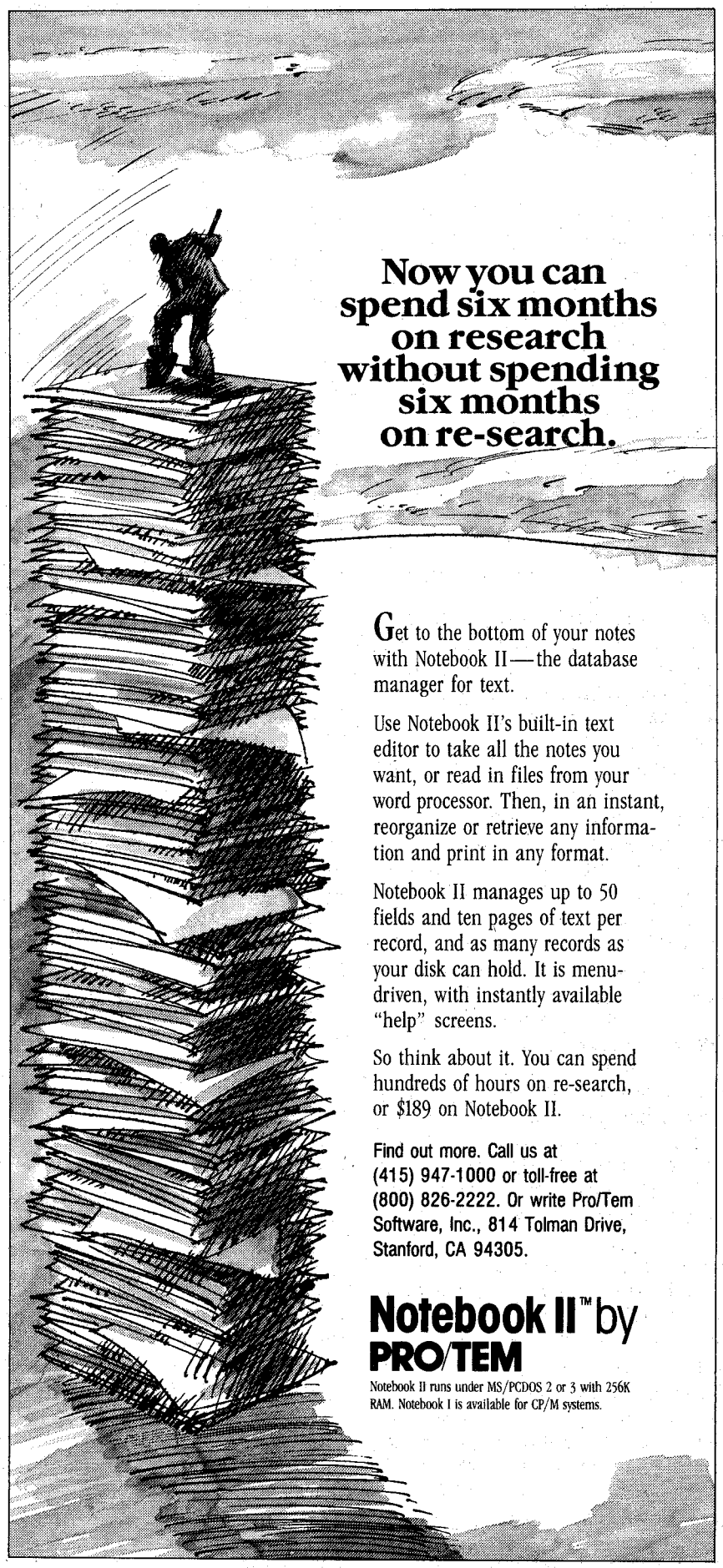
in exile in Paris, and although they were "relatively undogmatic" and open to traditional wisdom, they stumbled from one mistake to the next until World War II. But the cadres learned from their errors. Their genius, Kolko argues, lay in their ability to combine political and military strategy. In this way they became the "logical unifiers" of the exploited peasantry, which had watched the French destroy its ancient landholding patterns, and of the "semi-working class" of the plantations, mines and factories."

When the right conditions emerged, in August 1945, Ho Chi Minh was in a position to order his cadres to seize power. The Viet Minh (Front for the Independence of Vietnam) opportunely filled the vacuum created by the defeat of the Japanese in the brief month that it took the French to reorganize their imperial forces. They also won political legitimacy, which they maintained as they began to work toward their larger goal: to forge a national consensus by tying Vietnamese patriotism to proletarian internationalism.

The book analyzes the rise of Ho Chi Minh to leadership and presents the most salient conflicts that he faced during his long and difficult tenure. Kolko describes the Vietnamese leader's "self-effacing style [which] made him even more charismatic because it was all too rare." At times Kolko's interpretation is too much colored by his admiration for the Vietnamese Communist Party chief: Ho Chi Minh, he writes, is "the only important true organizational Leninist to emerge from the international communist movement." But in general, he provides new facts and insights about America's adversary in sober and comprehensible, if occasionally overly abstract, terms.

The Vietnam War was a class war, fought first against France and then against the United States. It was a nationalist and communist revolution challenged by an imperialist and capitalist counterrevolution. The United States intervened, Kolko writes, "to establish and sustain an alternative to the Communist Party." U.S. planners believed that there were in Vietnamese society "sufficient indigenous bases" for success. These so-called bases turned into the Republic of Vietnam, or R.V.N. Again, Kolko fills an important gap by providing a detailed and original history of that American creation.

He guides the reader through "the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RVN's Byzantine politics and power struggles," using U.S. government documents to portray "the entire panoply of groups, factions, miniparties, and aspirants to power" that lobbied the South Vietnamese military establishment. Washington searched desperately for a unifying candidate, a charismatic leader who would also obey its orders. A series of politicians and generals were chosen and abandoned; Gen. Nguyen Van Thieu and Air Marshal Nguyen Cao Ky were finally selected "not so much . . . as a superior alternative but because Washington's former allies had enervated it." By 1964, Kolko writes, "the United States was relying on its own resources by necessity."

Kolko dismisses the interpretation of liberal handwringers who have labeled the Vietnam War a tragedy or an aberration on the U.S. road to world power. Concern about credibility, he insists, brought the United States into conflict with the Vietnamese Communists; along with the domino theory and anxiety about Soviet bases, that concern remains central in formulating national security policy. Richard Nixon provided confirmation of Kolko's thesis in a January 8 *New York Times* Op-Ed piece. "From my vantage point," Nixon wrote, "the war in Vietnam was not just about Vietnam but about Cambodia, Laos, Indonesia, Angola, Ethiopia and Nicaragua." Fear that the integrity of the United States would be compromised led John Kennedy, Dean Rusk, Lyndon Johnson, Richard Nixon and Henry Kissinger to manipulate foreign elections and U.S. public opinion, and to drop more bombs on Vietnam than the total used in World War II.

As well as an antidote to the shabby patriotism that is being floated as scholarship, Kolko offers a way of looking at history through the eyes of an emerging nation, an alternative to the imperial vista. Just as Nixon called the Vietnam War a step toward the weakening "of the spirit and will of Americans to play a responsible role in the world," Kolko understands it as a moment in which masses of people become historical actors. He shows how key events in the course of the war combined with Vietnamese national character traits, enabling heroic individuals to overcome superior technology and firepower. In the eyes of many Americans and Europeans, the Vietnamese people represented the epitome of Third World liberation movements. Some 2 million Vietnamese died in the war.

Kolko's history ends with the war, not with its aftermath—the horrors of Cambodia, the boat people and a South Vietnam plagued by American consumerism in its culture and Agent Orange in its soil. In that period the Vietnamese leaders coped less well. What produced the phenomenon of the boat people? Why did the Vietnamese leaders fail to stave off the confrontation with the Khmer Rouge and later the Chinese? What happened to the "flexibility" and "wisdom" they displayed during the war? Why did they isolate themselves from their friends abroad? One hopes that Kolko will go on to write another volume, picking up the threads that he has left dangling. □

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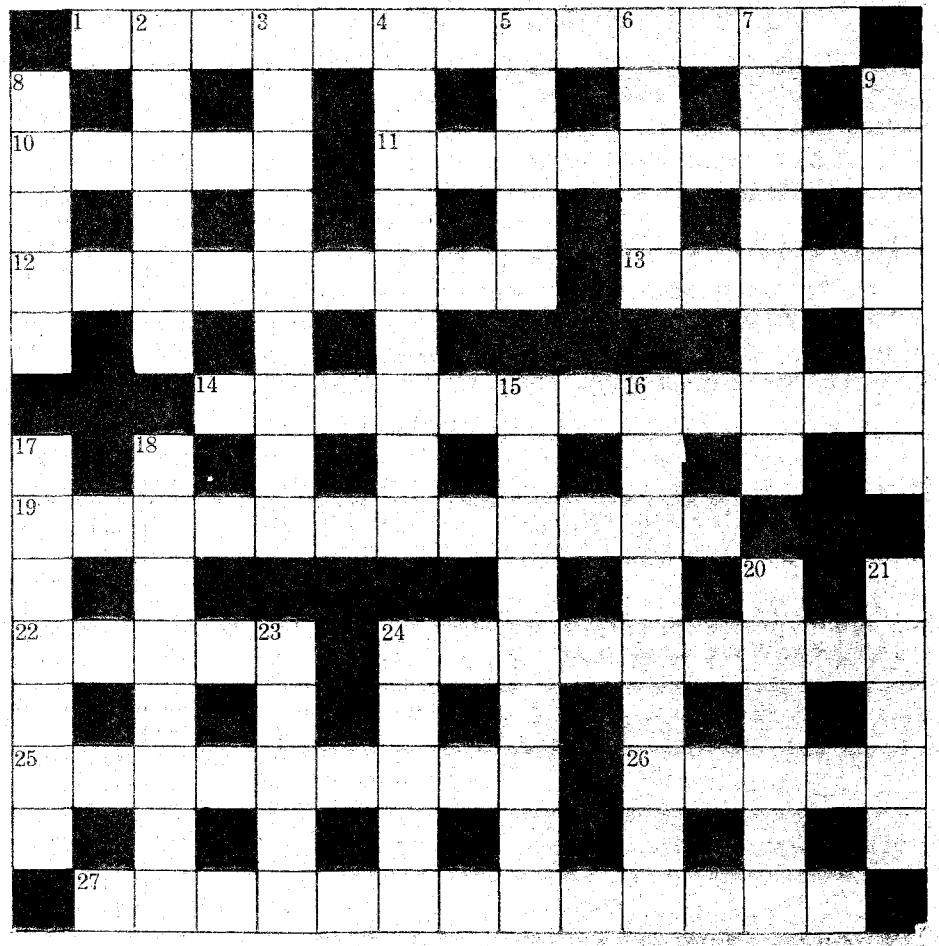
W	I	L	L		F	U	N	G	I		R	E	E	L
	A		T		I		E		V		O		D	
		P	S	Y	C	H	E	D	E	L	I	C		

LOCAL 0102 INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF MACHINISTS AND AEROSPACE WORKERS AFL-CIO
AMALGAMATED LITHOGRAPHERS OF AMERICA
X-523

Crossword Puzzle No. 2098

FRANK W. LEWIS



ACROSS

1 and 8 down Daughter, in a sense, may go to London to see this? (8,2,3,5)
10 22 might be by a form of stool—making such rather distraught. (5)
11 The kind of girl that might not be good about reading, for example, should prepare good food, at least. (9)
12 One does, to the girl mentioned in the first clue, to turn out the guard. (Back where some people supposedly feel at home?) (9)
13 Something had could happen only in the seventies? (5)
14 Sgt. Friday (or any other investigating officer) might claim to be so later on in the crime. (5,3,4)
19 Does it involve coming up for air while swimming, or is that just your view? (12)
22 Saw an example of them in cat's-paws? (5)
24 Members of a religious community started out once badly, with what might result in itches. (9)
25 Personate a form of Dr. Zamenhof's love, no doubt. (9)
26 One with Descartes, for example, might be associated with a good night. (5)
27 They sound like certain warriors of Saladin, but are barely numbered in the thousands. (7,6)

DOWN

2 You might consider us rash, and then decide one is in the cavalry. (6)
3 What some fishermen expect to make probably should be reported. (3,6)
4 Working together, one could also find a soloist so. (2,7)
5 Forge the output of a composer? (5)
6 What the anchor has is not necessarily due to accident. (5)
7 A mad example, perhaps, like a cape. (8)
8 See 1 across
9 Having the will to be so? (7)
15 The ornaments might be by Twelfth Night, and somewhat abashed with a peg. (5,4)
16 Sir, might one be called so after such an experience! (9)
17 Touched on this, however, it's found in the wrong date. (7)
18 An eagle perhaps might be under the weather this way . . . (5,3)
20 and certainly not like 18, no matter what! (2,4)
21 Star-shaped flower . . . (5)
23 . . . woody, and smaller than a tree . . . (5)
24 . . . able to bring back an article like this tropical plant. (5)

SEE LAST WEEK'S SOLUTION AT LEFT

PUZZLED?

No more cross words. If you don't see why "Lures" are "Ground Rules," send for those of Mr. Lewis to *The Nation*, 72 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10011.

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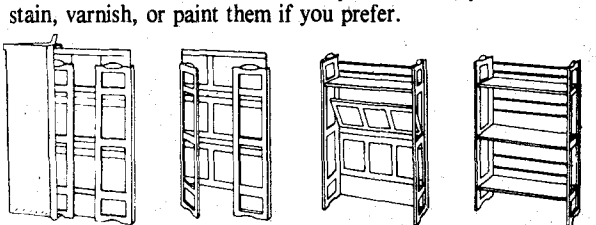

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